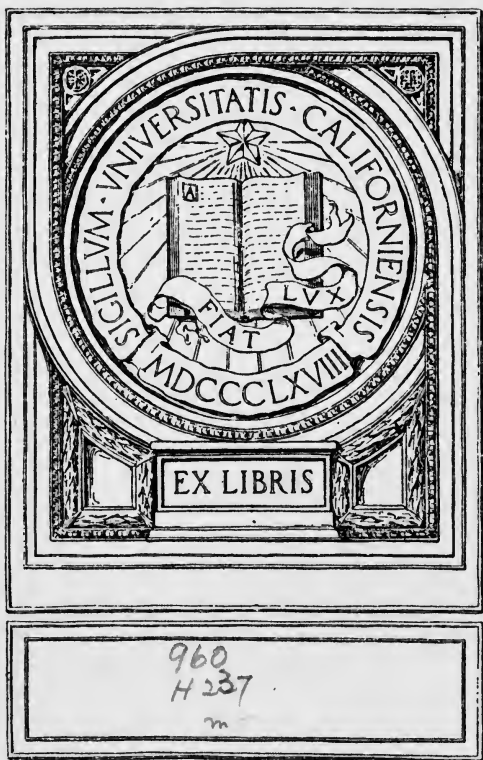


MONSIEUR D'OR

JOHN LOUIS HANEY



MONSIEUR D'OR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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MONSIEUR D'OR

A DRAMATIC FANTASY

BY

JOHN LOUIS HANEY



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TO
My Parents

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered, and rolled;
Heavy to get, and light to hold;
Hoarded, bartered, bought, and sold,
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled;
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old
To the very verge of the churchyard mould;
Price of many a crime untold;
Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Good or bad a thousand fold!

—Thomas Hood

THE CHARACTERS

The Prolog

ROBERT DORR
SIDNEY HASTINGS
JACK NORGATE
BILLY FANSHAW
PERCY MIDDLETON
HAROLD WESTBROOK
Mrs. SARA KEENE
ELEANOR RICHMOND, her niece
MARIAN WINTHROP
MARGARET THURBER
ROSE LOWELL
GERTRUDE PASTON

Scene I

MONSIEUR D'OR
RAOUL LEHMANN
FRÉDÉRIC LEHMANN, his brother
M. BERTINE, their secretary
M. ALBERT
M. LORRAINE
ADRIENNE COURTEAUX
CÉLESTE BERGÈRE
M. FREMIET

Scene II

MONSIEUR D'OR
ADOLPHE LEMAIRE
JEAN MOREAU
HENRI VAUX
HÉLÈNE VAUX, his daughter
Mme. CYPRIENNE DACIER
Mme. LUCETTE CLARY
BAPTISTE, a servant

Scene III

MONSIEUR D'OR
SIR MORTIMER MUIRHEAD
Mr. GILBERT, his secretary
BARON GRAEFFLINGEN
Herr LOBEN, his secretary
MARQUIS PALLOT
COUNT ANDRIEV
CLAIRE LASALLE, a stenographer

Scene IV

MONSIEUR D'OR
Dr. MIRSKY
RAMANAND, an Oriental
CYRIL, a boy
EDITH PACKARD, a nurse

Epilog

ROBERT DORR
Mr. MATHEWS
ELEANOR RICHMOND
Mr. HANSON, her secretary

The forty characters may be distributed among thirteen players. See note on page 10.

THE PROLOG

A terrace adjoining the Dorr Villa at Lenox.

SCENE I

The office of Lehmann Frères, St. Gallen.

SCENE II

The music room of the Chateau D'Or, near Versailles.

SCENE III

A private parlor in the Hotel Royal, Interlaken.

SCENE IV

A chamber in a Balkan palace.

THE EPILOG

A parlor in the Hotel Orient, Port Said.

Fifteen years elapse between the Prolog and the Epilog.

NOTE

The forty characters may be distributed among thirteen players as follows:

Prol.	Sc. I	Sc. II	Sc. III	Sc. IV	Epil.
DORR	D'OR	D'OR	D'OR	D'OR	DORR
WESTBROOK	R. LEHMANN	LEMAIRE	MUIRHEAD	RAMANAND	
HASTINGS	F. LEHMANN	MOREAU	GILBERT	MIRSKY	HANSON
FANSHAWE	BERTINE		LOBEN		MATHEWS
NORGATE	ALBERT	BAPTISTE	PALLOT		
MIDDLETON	FRÉMIET		ANDRIEV		
	LORRAINE	VAUX	GRAEFFLINGEN		
MRS. KEENE					
ELEANOR	ADRIENNE	HÉLÈNE	CLAIRE	EDITH	ELEANOR
MARIAN	CÉLESTE				
MARGARET		CYPRIENNE			
GERTRUDE		LUCETTE			
ROSE				CYRIL	

MONSIEUR D'OR

THE PROLOG

[*A handsome terrace adjoining the ball room of the Dorr Villa. Wide marble steps in the rear lead to a higher tessellated walk with marble balustrades. As it is night there is only a dim vista of the beautiful gardens beyond. On the right there is a similar approach by marble steps to the higher level. The ball room is reached by steps on the left. Its glass doors and deep windows are draped with exquisite lace curtains. Palms and other exotic plants are placed appropriately about the terrace; large, gaudy Japanese lanterns are strung overhead at various points. At each side of the terrace there is, in front of a bank of potted plants, a large marble bench provided with silk cushions. The orchestra in the ball room is playing a delightful Viennese waltz as the curtain rises. During the earlier part of the scene recurrent noise of laughter and chatter is heard from the dancers and their shadows are reflected on the curtains of the room. As the various couples emerge from the ball room or enter from the rear they engage in mutual conversation as they promenade without regard for the others. The characters all suggest superabundant wealth and a marked air of flippancy in the consciousness of their social pre-eminence. A few moments after the rising of the curtain SIDNEY HASTINGS and MARIAN WINTHROP enter from the ball room.*]

MARIAN. So the court granted her the custody of the children?

SIDNEY. And he is forbidden to marry again during her life time.

MARIAN. She gets alimony, of course?

SIDNEY. Fifty thousand a year.

MARIAN. Poor Mabel! She'll spend that in three months. I really believe the dear girl will have to make up with him or find some one else who is willing to take her with the youngsters. There's three of them, you know, Sid—and large families are not fashionable now. She'll never manage to scrape along on fifty thousand. Why, he used to give her that in jewels every year!

SIDNEY. I believe you're right, Marian. It seems a bit hard, doesn't it?

MARIAN. Mabel would have done better if she had gone to Reno. They're specialists out there, you know—they would have given her a square deal. [*They pass up the steps at the right and return slowly by the upper walk to the ball room. Meanwhile BILLY FANSHAW and MARGARET THURBER enter direct from the ball room.*]

BILLY. Yes, the whole story is in the New York papers this evening. Shot himself through the mouth and didn't live a minute. I felt sorry for the poor devil! Did you know him?

MARGARET. I knew his wife—she was Susie Caxton—one of the Amherst Caxtons. Lucky there's no children. Why did he do it, Billy?

BILLY. I suppose he couldn't stand the pace his particular Amherst Caxton was setting for him. He was only a bank clerk, you know, and trying to keep up with people who spent as much in a week as he earned in a year.

MARGARET. I thought he had an important position at the bank.

BILLY. My dear Margaret, how innocent you are! His position was important enough, but they didn't pay him more than they had to. He tried the stock-market to help him out and before he knew it he was juggling the deposit slips like a professional crook. The warrant was out for his arrest and he knew it. That's why he turned the gun upon himself.

MARGARET. Poor little Susie! She gave up Charlie Decker, who is worth at least ten millions, to marry that man. I suppose we've seen the last of her. [*During the latter part of the conversation PERCY MIDDLETON and ROSE LOWELL have entered from the ball room and have walked across the back of the stage, so that they now pass BILLY and MARGARET at the right and proceed along the front while the other two sit on the bench at the right side and converse.*]

ROSE. You shouldn't associate with that woman, Percy—she's a notorious character.

PERCY. She's not so bad. You girls are simply jealous. Besides, there's always a lot of reporters and johnnies hanging around her dressing-room. There's no chance to get really intimate. She seems to think a lot of me, though—you ought to hear her call me 'mon cher Pairsee'—she's not strong on English, you know.

ROSE. I don't know.

PERCY. Well, that's why I'm telling you. The other night I said to her, 'Natalie, your tongue can't speak English, but your eyes can speak every language there is in the world.' [*BILLY and MARGARET rise from the bench and return to the ball room by the upper walk.*]

ROSE. That was rather neatly put, Percy.

PERCY. [*Flattered.*] Wasn't it? The reporters wanted to write it up for the papers, but I called them off. Natalie doesn't like notoriety. She's not such a bad one, Rose, when you get to know her. Of course, she likes a bird and a bottle after the show and she gets a bit lively at times, but she doesn't lose her self-control. She's a thoroughbred. She's not like that Margaret Thurber we passed just now. At the Decker dance last week that girl just stowed away champagne till she fell off her chair. Now Natalie would know better than that; she's—

ROSE. See here, I don't want to hear any more about that vulgar chorus girl—

PERCY. Oh! you're just jealous—like the rest of them. Maybe Natalie wouldn't get a fit if she saw me out here in the dark with you. I believe she'd scratch your eyes out. She's a spunky little filly—she's a real thoroughbred. You've got to treat her right. [*As they pass off right to the garden, JACK NORGATE and GERTRUDE PASTON stroll along the rear terrace from the left and come down by the central steps.*]

GERTRUDE. There's Rose Lowell with that silly Percy Middleton. I don't see how she can tolerate the fellow.

JACK. That's no enigma. He's worth three or four millions, whereas the Lowells are not rich.

GERTRUDE. It's cruel of you, dear, to say that. Rose isn't the sort of girl to marry for money.

JACK. Why, Gertie, she must marry for money, whether it's cruel or not to say so. I'm sorry there's nothing more promising than Percy on her matrimonial

horizon. Shall we sit down a while? [*They take seats on the bench at the right.*]

GERTRUDE. He's a disgusting creature, Jack. I wish the Dorrs wouldn't invite him to their affairs.

JACK. Have you heard of his escapade with Mrs. Vansant?

GERTRUDE. Ah! that impudent Vansant woman! What has she been doing to Percy?

JACK. They gave her charge of a booth at the charity bazaar and when trade grew slack she announced that she would auction off a dozen kisses among the men. Just then Percy came along and bid fifty dollars for the entire dozen. That silenced the rest and she had to accept Percy's bid. He promptly paid the money, took one kiss, and notified her that he reserved the rest for future delivery.

GERTRUDE. What did Mrs. Vansant say to that?

JACK. Oh! she was game! She told Percy that she was ready whenever he was. I presume he will collect those kisses one at a time whenever he can make himself sufficiently conspicuous in doing it.

GERTRUDE. How disgusting! Buying and selling kisses!

JACK. You're right, dearest! Kisses were not meant to be sold. [*He looks around towards the ball room to make sure that they are alone, then kisses her passionately. Meanwhile PERCY and ROSE have re-entered from the right just in time for the tender scene. It is too late to retreat, so they tiptoe awkwardly and hurriedly across the back of the terrace to the ball room.*]

GERTRUDE. [*Freeing herself.*] How imprudent, Jack. Somebody might have seen us.

JACK. Now don't scold me, Gertie. I made sure that we were alone; besides, I don't often get a chance—

GERTRUDE. [*Curtly.*] Won't you take me back to the ball room? [*They rise and walk towards the left.*]

JACK. You're not angry, I hope? We were talking of kisses, dear, and I simply couldn't help it.

GERTRUDE. We were talking of Percy Middleton's buying the kisses of that odious grass-widow.

JACK. I'll admit that I did wrong, and I'm very, very sorry. Does that satisfy you? [*After a pause.*] Now let's kiss and make up.

GERTRUDE. [*Smiling.*] Another kiss! Jack, you're incorrigible. [*She kisses him tenderly.*] You dear boy! Will it always be like this?

JACK. [*Taking her in his arms.*] Always—forever—and so on for eternity. We shall be all in all to each other and the rest of the world will be as nothing to us. Just you and I—we two alone—

GERTRUDE. Dear Jack! I am so happy! [*They enter the ball room. From the rear HAROLD WESTBROOK and ELEANOR RICHMOND come slowly down the central steps; her demeanor is serious, his is somewhat depressed. They seat themselves on the bench at the left side.*]

ELEANOR. How soon do you leave?

HAROLD. In a few days. The ranch is a large one and I'm needed out there. I had no intention of asking you so soon, Eleanor—I'm afraid fortune has been against me, but it was my last chance to see you alone—I had to speak!

ELEANOR. [*With sympathy.*] I am heartily sorry it cannot be otherwise, but our decisions in the real crises of life seem often not to rest with ourselves.

HAROLD. Have you no hope to offer me? No chance that some day you may be willing to join me in the West, to work out our destinies together in the great world beyond the plains?

ELEANOR. No, I feel sure it can never be—but I hope we shall remain good friends. I want to hear from you, Harold, and I shall pray for your happiness in your new home. I shall always remember that you have paid me the sincerest tribute that a true man can offer a woman. You have put a consecrated seal upon our friendship. No matter what our lot may be in the days to come, we must never forget this night.

HAROLD. Heaven knows, I shall never forget it. There is consolation in the thought that you are not going entirely out of my life. Your kindness has brought a soothing calm over my great grief. I have no right to ask if there is another to whom you have given your heart, but Heaven has indeed blessed that man.

ELEANOR. Heaven has blessed every man and every woman who has known true love. If our human frailty is such that we can never comprehend the full measure of that blessing, we should at least be thankful for whatever glimpse of the divine vision is granted us.

HAROLD. You know best, Eleanor—your soul speaks with a clearer insight than mine. I shall abide by your decision—and I shall worship you till the end.

ELEANOR. Don't say that, Harold—you will meet some one else—

HAROLD. [*Softly, but with conviction.*] No, there will never be any one else. [*They sit in silence for a few moments. The music stops. HAROLD takes her hand and*

kisses it reverently. They rise and walk silently into the ball room. BILLY FANSHAW, JACK NORGATE and SIDNEY HASTINGS stroll in leisurely at the centre from the terrace behind the ball room.]

JACK. [*Looking after them.*] Harold Westbrook has been very attentive to Miss Richmond all evening.

BILLY. He's wasting his time in that campaign. I'll back Bobbie Dorr for any amount to win her against the field. [SIDNEY looks after the retreating figures and says nothing.] What do you think of it, Sid?

SIDNEY. Miss Richmond is altogether too fine a girl for Bobbie Dorr—that's my thought. [*He offers a cigarette to JACK, who accepts, then to BILLY.*] Smoke, Billy?

BILLY. No thanks! I came out for some fresh air. Besides, smoking spoils my appetite. I'm going to make another raid on the collation pretty soon. It's excellent stuff. I've had a couple of lobster cutlets, some sweet breads and two of the nicest soft crabs I ever ate. The Dorr certainly know how to do things.

SIDNEY. [*Bitterly.*] Who wouldn't know how to do things with the income of forty-odd millions at one's disposal?

BILLY. Forty-odd millions! [*Whistles.*] Forty-odd! Why, I'd be satisfied with the odd! [*Explaining.*] It might be seven or nine, you know. [*In a lower voice.*] I say, is that correct? Is it as much as that?

JACK. I don't believe that old man Dorr gathered so much out of his Nevada mines. Of course, he piled up a lot of money, but—

SIDNEY. I grant you, there were no forty millions in

his silver mines, but you are evidently not aware of his other interests that paid him enormously though his name was never associated with them. You may remember that no inventory was filed by the executors—but Simpson, who was chief counsel for the estate, told me a few things.

BILLY. [*Curiously.*] What did he say, Sid?

SIDNEY. He mentioned substantial shareholdings in the Kimberley diamond fields, in the Swiss lace and embroidery industries, in breakfast foods, railroads, water-power companies, automobile factories, tobacco, oil, sugar. [*Savagely.*] I declare that when Simpson got through with his catalogue of Dorr's interests I felt convinced that there was hardly a human creature in civilization who didn't pay tribute in some form to that old octopus.

JACK. [*Looking reflectively at his cigarette.*] And even the tobacco we are smoking! Rather lucky we know the Dorrs, eh? We can get back some of our tribute when we gather here as their guests.

BILLY. Bobbie Dorr and his aunt are certainly making the income on the forty-odd millions circulate with startling vivacity. I'm willing to help them. Won't you boys come in and get another bite of something to eat?

JACK. No, thanks.

SIDNEY. We'll finish our cigarettes first.

BILLY. Pity you fellows smoke so much—it spoils your appetite. Well, I'm off for another lobster cutlet and a sweetbread or two—[*He goes toward left.*] and I shall certainly have another of those delicious soft crabs. [*Exit left.*]

SIDNEY. I envy a man who can enjoy material exist-

ence as Billy does. Why, he's a personified stomach. I believe he'd sell his soul for a salad!

JACK. [*Laughing.*] Not much! Billy would make a better deal than that. He would demand at least a well-selected dinner with appropriate wines—then he might feel satisfied that he had made a real bargain.

SIDNEY. He's a sterling good fellow just the same—I'm glad to number him among my friends. I need a cheerful spirit like Billy about me occasionally—I am apt to grow bitter when I let my thoughts dwell on such men as Bobbie Dorr.

JACK. I don't see why you should feel that way about Bobbie. Of course, he's a child of fortune. With his good looks, his wealth, and his fair allotment of brains he is bound to play a conspicuous part in our social life.

SIDNEY. You know, Jack, I'm fond of growling at times and just now I'm not above criticizing a man who is virtually my host. There's something I don't like about Bobbie Dorr. I don't envy him his great wealth nor his social triumphs, but that insufferable air of presumption I cannot tolerate. What was his grandfather when he started for the West half a century ago?

JACK. Nobody in particular, I suppose.

SIDNEY. Josiah Dorr was a strong, keen-witted Yankee with no capital except his good health and his persistent optimism. He knocked about for a good many years before he made that lucky strike in Nevada.

JACK. And then he married and lived unhappily ever after.

SIDNEY. Not at all! Dorr married while he was still poor and with his usual luck chose a wife who was just

the right sort for him—a woman of no pretensions, but of sound common sense; and their married life was happy enough until the children grew up.

JACK. Bobbie's father and his aunt Martha?

SIDNEY. Exactly. The lamented Josiah, Jr., and [*Pointing toward the ball room.*] our charming hostess. Simpson told me that young Josiah was for many years a thorn in the flesh of his parents. He seemed to progress from one escapade to another till he crowned his list of indiscretions by marrying a third-rate actress whose pretty face was her only recommendation for public attention.

JACK. I didn't know that Bobbie's mother was an actress.

SIDNEY. Neither did the public, though she tried hard enough to make them think so. Of course, she gave up the stage when she became Mrs. Josiah, Jr. She probably expected to try her histrionic talent in melting the heart of the stern parent—but old Dorr didn't give her a chance. He never laid eyes on her!

JACK. Not even after Bobbie was born? That frequently makes a difference!

SIDNEY. Old Dorr saw nothing of Bobbie till both Josiah, Jr. and his actress-wife were dead. Then Aunt Martha took charge of Bobbie and the boy grew up under her care. After that nothing was too good for the hope of the family. They took him to Lausanne for his education, gave him a thoroughly cosmopolitan training, topped off with a few semesters at Heidelberg. He speaks four languages—but I don't believe he has been accused of enriching the world's store of thought in any of them. Behold to-night the finished product, capering in yonder

ball room! When he reaches his twenty-fifth birthday a few weeks hence he will be the happy possessor of some forty millions.

JACK. A fellow has little excuse for being anything but the most decent sort of chap under such conditions. Fate has been unusually kind to Bobbie Dorr.

SIDNEY. He's no silly offspring of superabundant wealth—Bobbie's a capital fellow in many respects, but I can't quite overlook his patronizing air, his superb confidence in the power of his riches. That sort of thing is pardonable in a man who has created the wealth, who has wrested it from the unyielding earth by the sweat of his brow or has won it by the exercise of his superior wit, but it takes little genius to inherit another man's money.

JACK. Here he comes, Sid; we're in for a quick change of subject. [*Louder.*] In my opinion, these gardens are among the most attractive at Lenox. There's that fine row of Lombardy poplars—[ROBERT DORR *enters from the ball room. His evening attire is beyond criticism save for the fact that he wears large gold studs in his shirt, a heavy gold fob and several conspicuously large rings.*]

DORR. Would anybody believe it? A room full of charming girls, and you two solemn philosophers out here in the dark discussing the Lombardy poplars. Can you find nothing better to talk about?

SIDNEY. I'm sure we're both booked for every dance on the list. It's a breath of fresh air we're after now.

DORR. Meanwhile the ladies are commenting upon your ungallant disappearance; but you cannot elude them long. Billy Fanshawe is bringing out a small party to

view the lower gardens. Perhaps such a trip would appeal to you?

JACK. It's a lark! I wonder how they ever got Billy away from the lobster cutlets and the soft crabs. [*Enter BILLY left, followed by MRS. KEENE, MARIAN, GERTRUDE, MARGARET and ROSE.*]

BILLY. [*Officiously, from the top step.*] All in line for a personally-conducted tour around the celebrated Dorr gardens. The small and select party will be carefully chaperoned by Mrs. Keene and will be under the immediate direction of Mr. William Fanshawe, the well-known cicerone, who will explain all points of interest.

JACK. Bully, old man! You're as impressive as the prospectus of a Cook's tour.

MRS. KEENE. Come on, girls. [*They descend to the terrace.*] Why, Mr. Norgate and Mr. Hastings! I have been wondering what had become of you.

SIDNEY. We just stepped out to admire the garden and we now crave permission to join your small and select party.

MARIAN. I think they're horrid in coming out here to smoke and then to pretend they were admiring the garden. I move that we refuse them permission to join our party. All in favor say 'aye.'

THE GIRLS. [*In chorus.*] Aye!

MARIAN. It is carried. Mr. Hastings and Mr. Norgate are not permitted to join us.

SIDNEY. Pardon me, Miss Winthrop, you are not parliamentary. You put your own motion—you even forgot to wait till some one seconded it.

MARIAN. What was the use? I knew they were all in favor of it.

SIDNEY. You ought to be in Congress—they need girls like you. But seriously, do you mean to say we may not join you?

GERTRUDE. Yes, and it serves you right, too!

BILLY. Hold on! I want to amend that resolution. If you girls don't mind, I should like to have Jack Norgate along. He knows the names of the trees and shrubs better than I do.

MARGARET. What! better than the well-known cicerone?

BILLY. I regret to say he does. In fact, I might make a mess of it without him.

MARIAN. Shall we relent, Mrs. Keene?

MRS. KEENE. I suppose so, though you are adding to my responsibilities as chaperone. [BILLY *mounts the marble railing and detaches one of the Japanese lanterns.*]

ROSE. But only Mr. Norgate—not Mr. Hastings. He has been too sarcastic.

SIDNEY. Ladies, I am overwhelmed with the sense of my shortcomings. I spare you the need of further deliberation by admitting that I am unworthy of your company.

GERTRUDE. How pathetic! I believe he's glad we don't want him!

MARGARET. Mr. Dorr, won't you join us?

DORR. Thank you—I think I shall try to entertain Mr. Hastings during your absence.

MARIAN. He ought to be left by himself.

DORR. I should hate to leave him in such bad company. I want to try moral suasion on him.

BILLY. I hope he survives. [*Holds up the lantern.*]
Ladies, are you ready?

MRS. KEENE. We shall surely need more light. It must be very dark at the foot of the garden.

BILLY. One's enough. Besides, if we had more, you might get confused and follow some other lantern instead of mine.

DORR. Don't forget to show the ladies the sun-dial.

ROSE. Oh! a sun-dial! Isn't that romantic!

SIDNEY. Especially at this time of night.

DORR. It's a quaint old dial that was brought over from Italy many years ago.

BILLY. [*Whispers to DORR.*] By the way, Bobbie, what does that Italian motto on the sun-dial mean? I always forget it.

DORR. 'Time will reveal all things.'

BILLY. Thanks. That helps me over one difficulty at least. Come on, ladies. We're now under way! [*He heads the procession off right, followed by MRS. KEENE and the girls. The latter speak almost simultaneously as they leave.*]

MARIAN. *Au revoir!* I hope you'll enjoy that moral suasion, Mr. Hastings!

ROSE. Don't spare him, Mr. Dorr!

GERTRUDE. I hope you will profit by it, Mr. Hastings!

MARGARET. You are too self-sacrificing, Mr. Dorr! [*They go off.*]

SIDNEY. [*Laughing.*] In such charming creatures as these rests most of our happiness in life. I suppose I ought to be in a penitent mood—they will all be ready to forgive me when I dance with them later on. [*He offers DORR a cigarette.*] Smoke, Dorr?

DORR. [*Takes cigarette.*] Thanks. [*After a pause.*]

Do you know, Hastings, the women seem to be more or less afraid of you? I've noticed it many times.

SIDNEY. The sex has evidently little respect for my cynical philosophy. It's a pleasure to toss a choice morsel of flippancy at them and watch them gasp.

DORR. [*Reflectively.*] They're a life-long study for the keenest man. How splendidly they play their parts! Every woman's an actress at heart. [*Pointing to the garden.*] There is a group of apparently ingenuous, simple-hearted young creatures alive to the pleasure of the moment and intent upon enjoying existence—yet I'll wager that in each feminine mind there are deep-laid schemes beyond your detection or mine.

SIDNEY. We men are at a disadvantage because we have no adequate weapon to match theirs—and the laws of common courtesy render us helpless before their cleverly concealed advances. To make matters worse, each fair antagonist plans her campaign in her own individual manner—woe to the presumptuous man who tries to generalize their methods. No two of them will act precisely alike in effecting their ends.

DORR. They're all alike in one thing, Hastings.

SIDNEY. What's that?

DORR. Their respect for wealth! They may be as individual as you please; but exhibit your pile of gold—the talisman that puts the luxurious gowns upon their backs and the gleaming jewels about their persons—and you'll find them all ready to purr like a lot of kittens over a bowl of warm milk!

SIDNEY. See here, Dorr, I thought I was a bit of a cynic myself, but I never quite believed that. You don't

mean to say that a woman cannot rise above a cringing regard for mere material wealth?

DORR. I mean just that; no woman—and no man either, for that matter. It was long before our time that a famous statesman declared that every man had his price—and I don't believe he had any intention of ignoring woman when he said it.

SIDNEY. [*Seriously.*] Well, if you really feel that way about it, I must insist that you are far more in need of moral suasion than I am. We two are very different, Dorr, in one respect.

DORR. Yes?

SIDNEY. If you will pardon my saying so, I flash an occasional cynicism upon the ladies that puts them on their guard and marks me as a person to be treated with caution. You retain their good opinion by an outward show of courtesy and deference, yet in your heart you entertain sentiments that make it impossible for you to respect a single human creature.

DORR. We're quite different in another respect, Hastings. You light upon a thing of this sort and brood over it until it spoils your good nature. I take it for granted that we are all corruptible and that none can stand the absolute tests of integrity, but I don't worry about it. This is a good enough world if one has the power to command its good things. When it comes to testing the power of its talisman [*He draws a few gold coins from his pocket and jingles them.*] I must affirm that those who have tried its virtues are, after all, the best judges of its merits. [*SIDNEY tosses away his cigarette with a gesture of disgust.*] What's the matter?

SIDNEY. The tobacco was beginning to taste bad; I have smoked enough, anyhow. [*He rises and gazes down into the garden.* DORR *hesitates for a moment, then crosses to him.*]

DORR. Evidently you find my views very shocking. Somehow I expected you to agree with me.

SIDNEY. I presume I am like most of my kind—when I find a man more cynical than myself I conclude that it is time to reform my philosophy of life. [*After a pause.*] Bobbie Dorr, when you say that you believe all men and women bow to the power of wealth, do you make no reservations—no exceptions?

DORR. I make no exceptions—not even myself! If I were a poor man, I should be as corruptible as the rest. There are no exceptions!

SIDNEY. [*Slowly.*] Not even such a girl as—Eleanor Richmond?

DORR. [*Annoyed.*] Why should you mention Miss Richmond in this connection?

SIDNEY. Pardon me—because I believe that you care more about her than you do about most girls. I know you admire her; I don't hesitate to say that I regard her as the embodiment of all that is lovable in woman. I wondered whether you were willing to class her with the rest of your mercenary herd—that is all.

DORR. [*With constraint.*] Miss Richmond has always enjoyed all the luxuries that wealth can supply. Where gold has nothing to offer it cannot be expected to corrupt. I should prefer to discuss this question in the abstract without considering its bearing upon Miss Richmond, or upon any one else, for that matter. [*Shrieks are heard from the garden.* SIDNEY *crosses to the right.*]

SIDNEY. Something has happened to Mrs. Keene's party!

DORR. [*Peering off right.*] They are coming up the path. Their lantern is extinguished! Billy's personally conducted tour seems to have ended in a fizzle.

SIDNEY. [*Looking towards the left.*] Those shrieks were evidently heard in the ball room. Miss Richmond is coming out. [*ELEANOR enters with an alarmed look. DORR crosses to her.*]

ELEANOR. What is it, Bobbie? I thought I heard some one crying from the garden.

DORR. You undoubtedly did. Billy Fanshawe has been trying to guide Mrs. Keene and a party of the girls about the place and he has evidently come to grief. We shall know in a moment.

ELEANOR. You don't suppose that anything serious has happened?

SIDNEY. It's hardly likely—Jack Norgate is with them. [*Confused voices and exclamations off right, drawing nearer.*]

DORR. [*Looking off.*] This way! Watch out for that step! [*Another shriek and exclamations. The girls tumble in hastily in couples. Finally BILLY and JACK supporting MRS. KEENE between them.*]

ELEANOR. Why, what has happened? [*The girls assist each other in smoothing their ruffled hair and gowns. The men escort MRS. KEENE to the right bench, where she gasps for breath.*]

MARIAN. Billy Fanshawe was showing us around the garden—and everything was so beautiful! We had just reached the sun-dial and Billy raised his lantern to read

the curious Italian inscription when a sudden gust of wind blew out the light—

GERTRUDE. And we were left in the dark—it was pitch dark, and the boys had no matches!

MRS. KEENE. [*Dramatically.*] There was no sudden gust of wind! Mr. Norgate deliberately blew out the light. I never experienced anything so outrageous!

JACK. My dear Mrs. Keene—I must protest. I was simply leaning over Billy's shoulder to see the inscription. I was just about to read off the Italian words when I suddenly found myself in total darkness.

SIDNEY. Perhaps your Italian pronunciation put out the light.

MRS. KEENE. [*Severely.*] Sidney Hastings, this is no matter for jesting. The worst is yet to come! [*The girls look at each other with assumed surprise.*]

ROSE. What do you mean?

MRS. KEENE. I mean that after that light went out the behavior of those young men was disgraceful. There was hugging and kissing all about me!

MARGARET. Oh! Mrs. Keene! How can you say such a thing? Of course, we all uttered exclamations of surprise.

MRS. KEENE. You certainly did—and several of you young ladies also said 'stop'! [*The girls look at one another.*]

BILLY. [*Slowly.*] I suppose Jack and I are disgraced forever, Mrs. Keene, if you're going to believe that about us. I say it's unkind.

MRS. KEENE. [*Witheringly.*] There is just one thing I'd like to find out.

JACK. [*Innocently.*] What is it?

MRS. KEENE. Which of you two young men put his arm around *my* waist—by mistake, of course! [JACK and BILLY look foolishly at each other. The rest chuckle wherever MRS. KEENE cannot see them.]

MARIAN. [*To the rescue.*] I believe I put my arm around your waist—I was very much frightened.

MRS. KEENE. [*With sarcasm.*] I dare say you girls were so much frightened that you all had your arms about each other's waists; and our two gallant escorts—I suppose they will also insist that they embraced each other for mutual protection.

DORR. I think you might make some allowance, Mrs. Keene. The boys were probably doing their best to keep the party close together.

MRS. KEENE. The party was close enough, I assure you. I'm glad it's all over. No more garden trips for me in the dark, especially when there are irresponsible young men in the party. [*She rises and crosses to the left.*] You girls had better come inside—the dancing will go on in a few moments.

ROSE. I'm so sorry about the sun-dial. I scarcely had a look at it—I was so anxious to see it.

GERTRUDE. We couldn't even read the Italian motto. What was it, Billy?

BILLY. The exact Italian words have slipped my memory, but they meant—let me see—they meant—

ELEANOR. 'Time will reveal all things.' [*Soft waltz music begins in the ball room.*]

MRS. KEENE. A very good motto, Mr. Fanshawe. Perhaps some day time will reveal how that light went

out! Come, girls, the music has begun. [*They enter the ball room in groups, DORR and ELEANOR in the rear. They detach themselves from the rest.*]

DORR. [*Softly.*] The next dance is mine, Eleanor. Shall we not stay out here for a few moments?

ELEANOR. Yes, if you wish. [*He leads her to the bench at the right.*]

DORR. I have been eager all evening to have a few words with you apart from that restless whirl inside—just we two alone, with our little secret!

ELEANOR. You silly boy! Be careful you don't betray us. [*Looks toward the garden.*] How delightful it is out here in the open! There is a slight breeze. Bobbie, do you believe Aunt Sara was right in declaring that the boys put out that light?

DORR. Certainly. You heard Gertrude Paston say the boys had no matches to re-light the lantern. Well, Jack was out here smoking with Hastings before he joined your aunt's party.

ELEANOR. Of course, Gertrude and Jack are rather fond of each other—

DORR. I don't blame him for not finding his matches.

ELEANOR. You know I didn't mean that—I don't believe Jack would do such a thing! You wouldn't, Bobbie?

DORR. Not in their bungling fashion, perhaps—but there's no telling what a fellow wouldn't do for a few golden moments with a girl he cared for. I grant that if there's a bevy of girls about, he may possibly hug the wrong one—he may even embrace the chaperone, eh? [*He laughs softly.*]

ELEANOR. Don't say such things, Bobbie. You shouldn't talk so flippantly.

DORR. It's true, isn't it? In spite of their apparent protests, there wasn't one in that party who regretted the little episode at the sun-dial—except your aunt, of course, and she protested mainly on behalf of outraged social decorum. One can hardly help being flippant about such women!

ELEANOR. Bobbie!

DORR. I know—she's your aunt—that's the best I can say for her; she doesn't deserve the honor. But after all, why should we bother about these people? We can be happy out here—with our secret. The time will be short enough. Who has the next dance?

ELEANOR. [*Looking at the card.*] Harold Westbrook.

DORR. He won't be long in claiming you. I can't help feeling decidedly jealous when I see some one else swinging you about the floor. [*He takes her hand.*] But soon I shall make them all envious forever—soon our little secret will no longer be our own. Within two months my grandfather's fortune passes into my hands, and then—

ELEANOR. Then you will be a very wealthy man, Bobbie, but your fortune will carry serious responsibilities with it. You can find better things to do than trying to make the other boys envious of you.

DORR. They must be envious when they learn that you are mine, when they see you resplendent as a queen, dazzling from head to foot; they'll no longer sneer at my wealth—they will realize what it has achieved for me!

ELEANOR. [*Withdrawing her hand.*] What your wealth has achieved for you! You believe that your grandfather's money makes a difference?

DORR. Why not? If I were a poor man, I wouldn't

ask a girl I loved to share my poverty and thus spoil her own chance of happiness; but if I can give my wife everything that heart can desire, why shouldn't it make a difference?

ELEANOR. [*Reflectively.*] There is one great happiness that is denied to the rich girl—the happiness that comes to the self-sacrificing wife who helps her husband in his struggle with the world, who stands at his side offering aid and encouragement until together they forge their way upward to the heights of success—a success that both can cherish as a result of mutual effort.

DORR. That's all mere story-book sentimentality. Let a poor husband and his self-sacrificing wife start out together in a life of poverty, and ten to one he's ashamed of her when he has made his fortune—if he ever does. The newspapers are full of such instances. Don't cast a romantic glamor over a state of affairs that would be extremely unpleasant in real life. You wouldn't be the sort of girl for such a career!

ELEANOR. [*With spirit.*] A true woman finds her happiness with the man she loves, whether rich or poor; she does not find it in a mere riot of gold!

DORR. But the gold helps! The gold makes life pleasant—it gives us what we desire. [*She turns away.*] Why, Eleanor, you're not going to let this spoil things? Remember our secret!

ELEANOR. Bobbie—[*A pause.*] We can no longer—

DORR. You're not going to throw me over for a mere difference of opinion? We have our lives before us and everything to live for—

ELEANOR. Yes, we have everything—except spiritual

kinship. I'm sorry, Bobbie—heartily sorry, but I'm also thankful I found that out in time. [*The music ceases.*]

DORR. The dance is over! Westbrook will be here in a moment to claim you. Will you let it end in this way?

ELEANOR. [*Rising.*] I cannot hope that you will understand how distressed I am, but I want to say just one thing, Bobbie—to-night seems to mark a turning point in our lives. I trust it is for the best. Whatever happens hereafter, I want you to remember the motto on your old Italian sun-dial—

DORR. [*Mechanically.*] 'Time will reveal all things.'

ELEANOR. Yes. We shall both grow older and perhaps we shall see with a clearer vision than now. I shall not forget—[*HAROLD enters hastily from the ball room.*]

HAROLD. Ah, Miss Richmond, you are here. The next dance is mine, I believe?

ELEANOR. [*Taking his arm.*] Yes, Mr. Westbrook. Are you coming in, Bobbie?

DORR. Not now. [*As they pass up the steps left, he deliberately lights a cigarette.*] 'Time will reveal all things.'—I hope it will; then we'll see if I'm not right. [*Taking a few gold coins from his pocket he tosses them in his palm.*] Now, my golden friends, you, at least, will be true to me! I shall rely upon you to show her—her and all the rest of them your wonderful power! [*He looks toward the ball room as the dance-music resumes and the curtain descends.*]

SCENE I

[The office of Lehmann Frères in their factory at St. Gallen. It is furnished in a manner appropriate to a prosperous business concern. In the centre is a large rectangular table with several chairs. At the left is a low flat desk with papers, telephone and chair. Close to the wall behind the desk is a telephone switchboard for communicating with various parts of the works. At the right there is a modern office-desk, richly furnished, with a hat-rack nearby. In the centre back is a large leather covered davenport above which hangs a portrait of the late M. Lehmann senior, the father of Lehmann Frères and the honored founder of the establishment. Elsewhere on the walls hang framed views of the plant and other appropriate pictures. There are exits right and left to inner offices, likewise two exits in the rear, the right exit leading to the street and provided with a glass-door, the left exit leading to the shops. Whenever the left exit is opened the heavy whirr of machinery is heard within. As the curtain rises, BERTINE is seen at the flat desk, left, signing papers. A few moments later the telephone bell rings. BERTINE answers the telephone at his desk.]

BERTINE. Hello! . . . Yes . . . M. Raoul Lehmann is out at present. . . . This is his secretary, M. Bertine. . . . Yes. . . . He should be here shortly. . . . No. . . . M. Frédéric Lehmann has an important conference on hand in this office at three o'clock. . . . No. . . . Impossible! . . . No! . . . No!! . . . Very well. . . . Good-by.

[*He hangs up the receiver and resumes work at his papers.*
RAOUL LEHMANN enters at the rear right entrance with hat, cane and gloves, which he places on the rack near his desk at the right.]

BERTINE. Good afternoon, M. Lehmann. I have just had a telephone call from a reporter of *Le Journal* asking for an interview with you or your brother.

RAOUL. Ah! So the newspapers have learned of our trouble with our operatives. I presume they wish to send a representative to the conference?

BERTINE. Yes. I took the liberty of informing the reporter that it was impossible.

RAOUL. Very good! Has my brother returned from luncheon?

BERTINE. Not yet, sir. [*He hands a telegram to* RAOUL.] This telegram arrived while you were out.

RAOUL. [*Opens it and reads.*] 'If possible, kindly postpone conference till five o'clock. I wish to be present at the meeting. Signed, D'Or.'

BERTINE. M. D'Or!

RAOUL. As he chooses to call himself—the grandson of the late Josiah Dorr, whose money coupled with the brains of my honored father [*Pointing to the portrait.*] made this great plant possible. Let me see—the Dorr estate holds about one-third of the shares, does it not?

BERTINE. Somewhat more. Within the last few months they have increased their holdings to nearly forty per cent.

RAOUL. In any event, it is enough to command respect for such a request as this. [FRÉDÉRIC LEHMANN enters at the rear right entrance with hat and gloves.] Ah! Frédéric. I have just received this communication from M. D'Or. [*He hands the telegram to FRÉDÉRIC.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Reads.*] So! The mysterious grandson and heir!

RAOUL. We must accede to the request. He may make trouble otherwise—we have enough to worry about without antagonizing our shareholders.

FRÉDÉRIC. By all means! If he is anything like his grandfather, he will strengthen our position very much. Old Josiah always took care that he got his share of the spoils—and usually a little besides!

RAOUL. [*To BERTINE.*] Kindly have M. Albert sent here at once. He heads the delegation, I believe?

BERTINE. Yes. [*He goes to the house-telephone and adjusts the plug.*] Hello. . . . Yes. . . . Ask M. Albert to come to the office. . . . Yes. . . . That's all.

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Looking at the telegram.*] So the grandson of old Mr. Dorr blossoms into M. D'Or!

RAOUL. Some rogue of a genealogist probably convinced him that the change of name could be defended. The rich American has a weakness for that sort of thing. The manufacture of genealogies is a more profitable industry than that of laces, Frédéric!

FRÉDÉRIC. Very likely; but it demands an imagination—an inventive faculty that most of us do not possess. [*ALBERT enters at the rear, left. He bows respectfully to the LEHMANNs.*]

RAOUL. M. Albert, our conference this afternoon will be postponed until five o'clock. M. D'Or, who is one of our American shareholders, wishes to attend the meeting, so we are making this change to accommodate him.

ALBERT. Very well, M. Lehmann. Shall I inform my associates?

RAOUL. Yes. I believe there are five of you?

ALBERT. Two of the men besides myself and two of the women.

RAOUL. You may return to your work, M. Albert. [ALBERT bows himself out at the left rear entrance.]

FRÉDÉRIC. [Who has been examining a paper at the table.] M. Bertine, will you look over this schedule and compare it with the duplicate on file in my office?

BERTINE. [Taking the paper.] Very well, M. Lehmann. [He bows low and goes out at the side door, left.]

FRÉDÉRIC. Bah! What a life it must be to cringe and bow continually to one's superiors. Our M. Albert from the shops is scarcely more servile than our M. Bertine in his attitude towards us.

RAOUL. True enough; but let M. Albert show lack of respect to so influential a man as M. Bertine and he would soon feel the consequences. Even the secretary of Lehmann Frères is a great man in the eyes of his inferiors. [He goes to his desk.] It's a queer world, Frédéric, but there's considerable satisfaction to be gained from being in the front ranks.

FRÉDÉRIC. Yes—to issue orders, not to take them; to command men, not to obey them. [Looks at the portrait.] What a debt we owe, Raoul, to the genius of our dear father!

RAOUL. [Drily, at the desk, without looking around.] And to the money of old Josiah Dorr!

FRÉDÉRIC. Certainly—but tell me, could anything be more useless, in fact more harmful than such money unless administered with discretion and foresight?

RAOUL. By the way, Frédéric, M. Bertine has just informed me that the Dorr interest is now forty per cent.

of our capital. Have you been keeping track of the stock-transfers?

FRÉDÉRIC. You signed the certificates as well as I.

RAOUL. True; they were all for small amounts, but it now occurs to me there were a great many of them. I often regret that we ever reduced our holdings below an actual majority of the stock. Of course, you had to furnish your villa on the Axenstrasse—

FRÉDÉRIC. And you needed money to keep your racing-stables stocked with thoroughbreds. You know very well, Raoul, that you disposed of more shares than I did.

RAOUL. We have both been careless in the matter. Our joint holdings are about forty-five per cent., which is but a little more than the Dorr estate now holds. I know, the rest is scattered in small lots, but I get apprehensive at times. [*He goes over to FRÉDÉRIC.*] Frédéric, we have a serious duty before us—we must regain a majority interest of the stock.

FRÉDÉRIC. You are right. We cannot afford to take chances on losing control of the business. I shall increase the mortgage on my villa; you can probably spare a few of your horses?

RAOUL. Yes. We must also devise other means of raising money. One thing is certain—we cannot grant the demand of our workpeople for higher wages. [*He picks up the petition from BERTINE'S desk and scans it.*] I note that they ask for a uniform advance of ten per cent. in all departments.

FRÉDÉRIC. They might as well ask for one hundred and ten per cent. [*Laughing.*] You and I agree on that subject, at least—and M. D'Or is not likely to intercede

for them if he is as fond of fat dividends as his respected grandfather used to be!

RAOUL. We need not fear M. D'Or. It is probably idle curiosity that brings him here. [*Voices are heard in the room, left.* BERTINE enters excitedly, followed by D'OR, who is dressed in fine white flannels, with gold-headed cane, gold band on straw hat, several conspicuous gold rings and a heavy watch fob.]

BERTINE. [*Sppluttering.*] M. D'Or! M. Raoul Lehmann, M. Frédéric Lehmann! [*He bows himself out.*]

D'OR. [*With familiarity.*] Ah, gentlemen, so I stand in the presence of Lehmann Frères. [*They shake hands.*] You evidently expected me to enter by your front door [*Points back, right.*] but I stole a march on you. I have been inspecting the factory for the past two hours.

RAOUL. [*Surprised.*] Inspecting the factory!

D'OR. I have been all over the plant—it is truly a model establishment. I am pleased to be associated in the control of such an admirable hive of industry. You will pardon my unconventional way of learning these things, but I did not wish to be bored by an official and perfunctory inspection starting from the office. I therefore took matters into my own hands—and starting at the bottom, I have worked my way to the intellectual summit of the structure. [*He looks about him.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. It is a pleasure to know that we stood this unusual test so well, M. D'Or—but, after all, the house of Lehmann Frères has nothing to conceal—

D'OR. Evidently not. Your product is of the highest grade and commands the best markets; your people work under the most hygienic conditions. They are a busy mul-

titude—those hundreds of men and women in the shops. By the way, gentlemen, I observed some very pretty girls among them—but I suppose you are already familiar with that fact.

RAOUL. [*Coldly.*] Pardon me, M. D'Or—my brother and I are hardly in a position to admire the personal charms of our employees. We are both married men.

D'OR. Ah! I see—you may not talk freely of such things. How promptly you seem to suspect that I was about to intimate something quite shocking. Charming girls, just the same, even if they do not bask in the sunshine of your favor. I became interested in one of the young women in your lace department and stopped for a few moments to question her about her work—a Mlle. Adrienne—Adrienne—[*He pulls out a small memorandum book.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. Mlle. Courteaux.

D'OR. Thank you—that was the name. I was amazed at her dexterity and the rapidity with which she worked. It was fascinating; yet she told me that she receives only thirty-five francs a week.

RAOUL. Did she say *only* thirty-five francs? She is one of our most skilful and best-paid operatives.

D'OR. No—I supplied the *only*! It is an outrage—that attractive young figure bending over the machine, those well-shaped, nimble fingers constantly at work—and a miserable five and thirty francs at the end of the week! No wonder your workers are complaining.

FRÉDÉRIC. But, M. D'Or, we pay the same wages as all the rest. There must be a profit in the business—a fair return for the large capital invested.

D'OR. I wish above all things to act intelligently when we meet their delegation this afternoon—that is why I chose my own way of becoming acquainted with the establishment. Have your people formulated their grievances?

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Taking the document from BERTINE'S desk.*] Yes, here is their petition addressed to us. We did not wish to be subjected to their oratory at the conference, so we insisted upon a preliminary bill of complaint.

D'OR. [*Scanning the sheets.*] H'm—in view of the prosperous times—plant working to the limit of its capacity—unprecedented business—increased rents—higher cost of living—we request a general increase of ten per cent. Why, surely, it is very little that they ask?

RAOUL. Do you realize what an effect it will have upon our dividends?

FRÉDÉRIC. Are not our shareholders entitled to first consideration?

D'OR. [*Still glancing at the petition and not heeding their remarks.*] 'Respectfully submitted, Messrs. Albert, Lorraine, Frémiet; Mlles. Céleste Bergère, Adrienne Courteaux'—well, I declare, my charming friend of the lace-machine is to be one of your delegation! How soon do we meet them?

RAOUL. I think we had better agree upon some line of action before we invite the delegation to the office. We should at least present a united front.

D'OR. How do you usually act in such an industrial crisis as this?

RAOUL. Sometimes we find it necessary to make a partial concession—they are usually crafty enough to ask for

twice what they expect to get. Occasionally we can win over a delegation by assuring them of an individual raise in wages and thus send them back to their associates with a discouraging report.

FRÉDÉRIC. We dare not tamper with the present delegation—they would be difficult to handle. Their leader, Albert, is a quiet fellow, but the soul of honor. [*Looks over the petition.*] Lorraine is an old man, generally esteemed and beloved by his associates; Frémiet is a rascally socialist, a constant breeder of trouble. [*He drops the petition.*]

D'OR. [*Picking up the petition.*] And the girls, Mlles. Céleste and Adrienne—what lovely names they have!

FRÉDÉRIC. We never worry about the women in such delegations. They are easily managed. It is strange, Raoul, that just those two should have been chosen. You should know, M. D'Or, that Adrienne Courteaux is a good, highly respected girl, who is supporting her widowed mother. As for Mlle. Bergère—what shall I say, Raoul?

RAOUL. [*With sarcasm.*] I hardly know how she will appeal to M. D'Or's fancy. She lacks exactly those virtues and qualities that strike us so favorably in Mlle. Courteaux.

D'OR. Well, gentlemen, I see that you know something after all about the young women of your establishment, in spite of the fact that you are both married men—but, seriously, how do you propose to answer their request for an advance?

RAOUL. There is but one answer if we are not to reduce our dividends—the request must be refused.

D'OR. And the admirable Mlle. Courteaux, supporting a widowed mother, will continue to get only thirty-five francs a week?

FRÉDÉRIC. Her case seems to distress you most. Do you realize that even with the increase she would be earning less than forty francs?

D'OR. True—I hadn't thought that it meant so little—so contemptibly little. Gentlemen, I propose that we grant the ten per cent. increase and that in such deserving cases as Mlle. Courteaux's we give an additional increment.

RAOUL. [*Leaping to his feet.*] M. D'Or, pardon me—but what you propose is impossible! Lehmann Frères are now paying the maximum wage-scale. We cannot increase wages further without defying an established economic law.

D'OR. M. Lehmann, the economic law has tyrannized over us long enough—it must be taught a wholesome respect for the power of gold. Of what value is wealth if it cannot crush so immaterial a thing as an economic law?

RAOUL. If you have no regard for your own interests, you should at least respect the investment of the other shareholders.

D'OR. Who are the other shareholders?

RAOUL. You hold some forty per cent. from your grandfather's estate together with recent additions; my brother and I jointly own—[*A pause.*] about half of the stock or a little over. That leaves about six or eight per cent. in small scattered holdings. [FRÉDÉRIC looks anxiously at D'OR.]

D'OR. [*With a sinister expression, drawing a bundle of certificates from his pocket.*] M. Lehmann, you and your brother own forty-five per cent. or less! The so-called scattered holdings are not six or eight per cent.—here are at least fifteen per cent.—you will observe that each certificate is endorsed in my favor.

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Leaping up.*] Then you actually own a majority of the stock? [RAOUL *buries his face in his hands and groans.*]

D'OR. Yes. The Blausteins at Paris have been quietly obtaining this little block of Lehmann Frères for me. Gentlemen, I was surprised to learn that you had permitted the control to escape you.

RAOUL. [*Walking excitedly.*] Why should the delegation consult with us, Frédéric? M. D'Or now dominates the situation—why prolong the agony?

D'OR. You should not be so bitter, M. Lehmann, because the sins of your own negligence have found you out. Your lie a moment ago is pardonable. I recognize your talents—you have maintained and advanced a great industry established by your father. I hope you will continue to direct the interests of Lehmann Frères. I simply wish to act as spokesman in the conference with your delegation—I may say *our* delegation of workers.

RAOUL. Why ask of us a favor that we have no power to withhold? Complete your triumph! We are in your hands! [D'OR *glances for a moment at the angry* RAOUL, *then turns to* FRÉDÉRIC.]

D'OR. Kindly summon the committee!

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Rings.* BERTINE *enters, left.*] M. Bertine, please ask the delegation to come at once. [BERTINE *goes*

out, rear left. FRÉDÉRIC crosses over to RAOUL, who seems crushed and helpless. *He tries to encourage RAOUL.*]

D'OR. [*Looking at portrait, after a pause.*] Your father's portrait, I presume?

RAOUL. Thank Heaven, he did not live to see this day!

D'OR. [*Drily.*] If he had lived there would have been no such day—at least, it would not have disturbed his equanimity.

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Comforting RAOUL.*] Do not reply, Raoul. Let us at least preserve appearances before our employees. [*Enter, rear left, BERTINE, followed by ALBERT, then CÉLESTE and ADRIENNE, finally LORRAINE and FRÉMIET. Throughout this scene RAOUL labors under suppressed excitement; FRÉDÉRIC is more composed.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. M. D'Or, this is the delegation of our workpeople who have arranged for to-day's conference. May I say to the committee that we are honored in having with us M. D'Or, who has a large interest in Lehmann Frères and wishes to participate in our deliberation.

D'OR. I should like to meet the delegates individually.

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Indicating.*] M. Albert is their leader.

D'OR. [*Shaking hands.*] M. Albert, I am glad to grasp the hand of a man who has the mark of leadership in his personality. [*Pointing to the petition.*] Is this petition your work?

ALBERT. [*Modestly.*] Only partly, monsieur. The committee worked on it as a body.

D'OR. It is a masterful summary. I congratulate you! [*ALBERT bows with a look of gratification and steps aside.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Introducing LORRAINE.*] Our oldest worker, M. Lorraine.

D'OR. The oldest worker! Most interesting! How long have you been associated with the company?

LORRAINE. I was twenty when the honored father [*Points to the portrait.*] of Messrs. Lehmann first engaged me—and I've been here ever since. I have two sons and five grandsons here now. I am seventy-three years old.

D'OR. [*Astonished.*] Fifty-three years of faithful service—and you are still among the workers! How is it that you have not risen to prosperity in that time?

LORRAINE. [*Without bitterness.*] We cannot all hope to reach the top. Some of us have not the brains—and others have not the chance. I have always been a sober and industrious man, but the pay is not large. I do not complain, however—I have always been treated well.

D'OR. It is unjust—rankly unjust! [*He turns to FRÉMIET.*] And our third delegate?

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Curtly.*] M. Frémiet.

D'OR. Ah! I recall—the anarchist!

FRÉMIET. Pardon me, I am a socialist.

D'OR. Is there any difference? [*FRÉMIET'S look is contemptuous.*] I am quite unfamiliar with your nice distinctions of political or economic creed. I dare say you regard yourself as a very badly used person?

FRÉMIET. Yes. Every worker is badly used. He does not get his share of the wealth that he creates by the sweat of his brow.

D'OR. I suppose you believe that all men are created equal?

FRÉMIET. They are not—they should be.

D'OR. Ah! So you actually have a grudge against Nature in the first instance. How unhappy you must be!

At any rate you believe in social equality. Let me test your faith. You are a workman, laboring faithfully week after week at the plant of Lehmann Frères; I am a gentleman of leisure, living idly on an inherited income. Do you believe that any social upheaval can ever make me your equal?

FRÉMIET. [*Misunderstanding.*] I regard myself as any man's equal, poor and crushed as I am. It is a cruel social tyranny that keeps us down.

D'OR. Pardon me, my friend—you did not listen carefully. I asked whether you believed that any social upheaval could make me *your* equal.

FRÉMIET. You are mocking me, M. D'Or. In your heart you know that you are my superior—my superior in everything that is most desirable in this world. You live your life according to the dictates of your own fancy, you call no man master, the pleasures of the world are at your beck. Why should you seek to torture me and these others on the rack?

D'OR. [*Turning to the LEHMANNNS.*] Really, I had no idea that my visit was to be so interesting! [*To FRÉMIET.*] M. Frémiet, you are something better than a socialist—you are a poet. Instead of working at the lace-machines you should capitalize your thoughts. You would soon attract sufficient attention to make you rich and famous—and incidentally to drive every vestige of socialism out of your system. [*FRÉMIET bows with evident pleasure.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Introducing CÉLESTE.*] Mlle. Bergère.

CÉLESTE. [*With a curtsy, archly.*] Céleste Bergère.

D'OR. [*Bowing.*] Mademoiselle, I am particularly

interested in the welfare of the young women in our work-rooms. In which department are you?

CÉLESTE. I assist in sorting and packing embroideries.

D'OR. And what is your pay for this service?

CÉLESTE. Twenty francs a week.

D'OR. Twenty francs! How can one live on such wages?

CÉLESTE. [*With a deliberate look at the LEHMANNs.*] One cannot—and very few make the effort. [*The LEHMANNs are astounded and annoyed at her audacity; the men of the delegation seem uneasy; ADRIENNE draws away from CÉLESTE.*]

D'OR. [*With sympathy.*] Pardon me for asking that question. I might have anticipated the answer. Of course, a girl living at home with her family is under less expense—

FRÉMIET. [*Starting forward.*] How about the rest? It means ruin for the rest!

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Waving FRÉMIET back and introducing ADRIENNE.*] I believe you have met Mlle. Courteaux.

D'OR. [*Graciously.*] Yes, I met Mlle. Courteaux in the lace department. Your pay is thirty-five francs a week—it is inadequate, I know.

ADRIENNE. It would not be so bad if it were not for the doctor and for the medicines that my mother needs.

D'OR. You are your mother's sole support?

ADRIENNE. Yes. [*D'OR looks at her in mingled admiration and pity.*]

FRÉDÉRIC. Mlle. Courteaux receives high pay as the schedule is arranged. There are hundreds who receive far less.

D'OR. Heaven help the hundreds—and the thousands

of their kind elsewhere. [*To ADRIENNE.*] Are you happy at your work?

ADRIENNE. Yes; it is not difficult—one soon acquires the necessary skill.

D'OR. But you are surely looking forward to something better—something less monotonous than a lace-machine!

ALBERT. I hope some day to make Mlle. Courteaux my wife.

D'OR. Some day?

ALBERT. Yes. As soon as my pay is sufficient to keep us both.

D'OR. [*Looks at ALBERT, then ADRIENNE.*] This, too! Another tyranny of our industrial system! [*Turns to FRÉDÉRIC.*] Can Lehmann Frères afford to be accessories to such hardships?

FRÉDÉRIC. [*Coldly.*] It is distressing, of course—but we surely cannot undertake to reform society and bring about universal happiness.

RAOUL. [*Stepping forward.*] May I remind M. D'Or that we have summoned this delegation to discuss the wage-scale? We can hardly reach any conclusion by considering the individual cases before us.

D'OR. [*With suppressed anger.*] Thank you for reminding me, M. Lehmann. I have made the mistake of regarding our delegation as a group of human beings. [*He seats himself between the LEHMANNs.*] Let us settle down to business. I take it for granted we are all familiar with the contents of this petition—it sums up the situation aptly—unless our friend Frémiet wishes to make a speech?

FRÉMIET. I have no speech to make, M. D'Or. I have been listening attentively to you—you are a fair-minded man. I am perfectly willing to leave our grievances in your hands. [D'OR is visibly flattered.]

D'OR. Very well. [To RAOUL.] Now, M. Lehmann, you are the head of this great establishment—for years you have directed it ably and profitably. What do you suggest?

RAOUL. [Looking keenly at D'OR.] Are you asking for my opinion?

D'OR. Certainly. Can we do anything for our people?

RAOUL. [Speaking cautiously.] Perhaps what I say may appear unsympathetic—but I have always proceeded on the assumption that the shareholders deserve first consideration in the distribution of earnings. Our relation with our workers is in the nature of a personal contract—we offer a certain wage and they are free to refuse it and stay out of our employ if they so desire.

D'OR. That is sufficiently blunt to be understood by any one—and it's also quite orthodox, I believe; but let us drop abstractions. Can we afford the requested increase in wages?

RAOUL. [Feeling his way.] I wish to do the fair thing—but before all else I must advise the safe course. Our reports show clearly that a ten per cent. increase in all departments would ruin the concern. Perhaps we might compromise on a five per cent. advance and try it for—say six months, without committing ourselves to continue it beyond that term unless our earnings justify—

D'OR. [Impatiently.] Nonsense, M. Lehmann; you would offer Mlle. Bergère an extra franc per week, the

others perhaps two francs or less—do you imagine that you have solved the problem? I propose that we try the ten per cent. increase and give it a fair test.

CÉLESTE. [*Eagerly.*] Oh! M. D'Or, you are our good angel!

D'OR. [*Flattered.*] What is more, I propose to learn the circumstances of every girl who works in this plant, and wherever conditions warrant it, I shall recommend an increase of twenty per cent. or even more—

FRÉDÉRIC. It is impossible! We shall face bankruptcy!

D'OR. We might try it, at any rate.

RAOUL. [*Fiercely.*] Your plan cannot succeed.

D'OR. [*Ominously.*] None the less I ask you—shall we try it?

RAOUL. [*After a struggle.*] Yes, if you insist! [*The workers are astounded.*]

D'OR. [*To FRÉDÉRIC, blandly.*] Do you also agree?

FRÉDÉRIC. Yes. Do whatever you think best!

D'OR. [*To the delegation.*] Your petition is favorably considered and you may report to your associates that an increase of ten per cent. in all wages goes into effect immediately. [*The delegates are delighted; D'OR pays no attention to the rest, but gazes at ADRIENNE.*]

ALBERT. [*Kissing D'OR's hand.*] You are a friend of humanity, M. D'Or!

LORRAINE. [*With choking voice.*] I speak for my sons and grandsons when I say, 'Heaven bless you!' You have brought joy into our lives.

FRÉMIET. If all employers were like you, monsieur, I would stay away from our socialistic meetings.

CÉLESTE. [*Boldly.*] M. D'Or, Adrienne and I also wish to thank you, do we not? [ADRIENNE *stands with bowed head beside her.*] You have made us so happy! You will be a hero henceforth in the eyes of us all. [*She turns to ADRIENNE, expecting her to say something.*]

D'OR. And what do you say, Mlle. Courteaux? [ADRIENNE *raises her head and looks fixedly at D'OR for several moments of tense silence; then with a sob she bursts into tears.*]

ALBERT. [*Hastening to her.*] The truest tribute of all, M. D'Or! The tribute of tears!

RAOUL. [*Curtly.*] The conference being over, you may return to your work. [*The delegates pass out at the rear left.*] M. Bertine, you will at once post a notice in the shops announcing the increase in wages. [BERTINE *goes off, left.* RAOUL'S *demeanor changes completely.*] M. D'Or, in my whole life I have never experienced such a sense of humiliation, of utter degradation as in the last half hour. What a terrible man you are! How could you trample us so ruthlessly under foot—and before our workpeople—treating us like a pair of impotent puppets!

D'OR. [*Coolly.*] I like to feel the power of my wealth. You have had the same experience in dealing with your workers.

RAOUL. Why don't you exercise your power over them? It is easier and cheaper.

D'OR. They know the power of wealth—they need no further demonstration. The war of wealth against wealth is more to my taste at present. Besides, gentlemen, it is cleaner sport.

FRÉDÉRIC. Don't you realize that as the majority stockholder you must pay the lion's share of the bill?

D'OR. Yes, but it's worth whatever it costs to see such a precious pair as you brought to terms. I am satisfied with the reward that my generosity will bring. By nightfall I shall be heralded through the town as the kind friend of the downtrodden workers—

RAOUL. [*Bitterly.*] And Lehmann Frères will lose thirty to forty thousand francs a year!

D'OR. Of which nearly one half will fall upon you and your brother.

RAOUL. You forget, M. D'Or—there is still one resource. It would not be difficult to prove in any court of law that you are an irresponsible person. When a man, in order to gratify a passing whim, seeks to disturb the economic balance—

D'OR. [*With a sneer.*] Economic balance! I like that phrase! On the one hand, our wealth, securely entrenched with all its vast unlimited influence; on the other, the hands and brains of the numerous wretches whom we call our employees. Economic balance, indeed!

FRÉDÉRIC. M. D'Or, we shall not be ruined without a struggle. This industry has been fostered through two generations of growth and development. We take pride in it—

D'OR. Let us stop quarreling, gentlemen—I have heard enough in this strain. At what figure do you estimate your holdings in Lehmann Frères?

RAOUL. [*Interrupting FRÉDÉRIC.*] This morning our joint holdings were worth six hundred thousand francs—Heaven knows what they are worth now, with you in the saddle!

D'OR. [*Deliberately.*] Then I presume the easiest

way for me to restore peace and to avoid a commission in lunacy would be to pay you—let us say eight hundred thousand francs?

RAOUL. What do you mean? To buy us out?

D'OR. [*Toying with the petition.*] Yes—for eight hundred thousand francs.

FRÉDÉRIC. On what terms?

D'OR. A sight draft on the Blausteins at Paris. [*A frantic discussion between the brothers, which evokes a smile from D'OR.*]

RAOUL. [*Finally.*] We accept your offer!

D'OR. Are you no longer afraid that I am a desperate madman? Are you sure that a man who disturbs the economic balance can legally transact business? Would not the sale of your holdings at such an outrageous overvaluation be liable to attack in your courts?

RAOUL. [*Suavely.*] Not unless you or your friends should proceed. You made the offer yourself—we are not likely to test your sanity after the draft is honored.

D'OR. Gentlemen, I see you are not without a sense of humor. Kindly draw up a formal agreement—the actual transfer of the property can be effected to-morrow. [*RAOUL prepares an agreement.*] You can make immediate delivery, I presume?

FRÉDÉRIC. Yes. There is nothing to prevent you from taking absolute possession of the entire establishment at once. You will henceforth be able to follow the dictates of your own fancy in administering the affairs of the company. Would it be an impertinence to wish you success in your venture?

D'OR. I fear it would be, in the face of your conviction that I am doomed to inevitable failure.

FRÉDÉRIC. You are trying to do the impossible!

D'OR. The impossible is the only thing worth doing nowadays. [RAOUL shows the agreement to FRÉDÉRIC.]

FRÉDÉRIC. [Handing it to D'OR.] Very good!

D'OR. [Returning it to RAOUL.] Quite proper—and to the point. [RAOUL rings for BERTINE, who enters, left.]

RAOUL. M. Bertine, kindly let us have three copies of this agreement at once. [BERTINE takes the paper, glances at its contents and utters an involuntary cry.]

RAOUL. [Severely.] Have you forgotten yourself?

BERTINE. [Confused.] I—I beg your pardon, gentlemen. [He glances from one to another, looks at D'OR as at an apparition and goes out awkwardly.]

D'OR. [Sympathetically.] Poor fellow! How hard he takes it! Gentlemen, I confess that I looked for a possible word of sentiment from you—a desire to remain identified with the great business that your father had established and had developed to its present importance. I was even prepared to bid higher in case my first offer was not accepted—[The brothers look at him in mingled anger and covetousness.] but the sum seems to have satisfied your cupidity. However, I have an appeal to make. I do not wish to undertake the administration of this great industry—I know nothing about it. Do you care to remain here in your present executive capacity? I know we can agree upon terms.

RAOUL. Events have crowded each other so quickly that neither of us has any plans for the future. We shall be willing to stay—for a time at least, eh, Frédéric?

FRÉDÉRIC. Assuredly. I, for one, am interested to

know how M. D'Or's experiment is going to work out. Such audacity affords an enlightening spectacle to the business man of normal training.

D'OR. Thank you, gentlemen, I shall appreciate your co-operation. Such a business requires a certain amount of personal shrewdness and finesse with which you are evidently well equipped. [*BERTINE enters with the papers, hands them to RAOUL and goes off, left. RAOUL signs each copy, hands them to FRÉDÉRIC, the latter signs and passes them to D'OR.*]

D'OR. [*Signing the last copy.*] There we are! [*Each takes a copy.*] That settles the formal transfer—the details can go over till to-morrow. Is there anything further, gentlemen?

RAOUL. [*Somewhat excited, puts his hand to his brow.*] I—I do not feel altogether well. The excitement of the past hour is playing havoc with my brain! I had better go home—

FRÉDÉRIC. My dear Raoul—you are not ill, I hope?

RAOUL. You had better take me home. [*They get their hats and gloves.*] M. D'Or, I wonder whether you are not a demon—or an apparition of some evil dream!

D'OR. Have no fear, M. Lehmann. You will find my draft on the Blausteins a very reliable piece of paper—in exchange for which I am to receive [*Throwing out his arms.*] all this!

RAOUL. [*In agony.*] Ah! this is terrible! [*He goes out, rear right, followed by FRÉDÉRIC. D'OR looks after them with a laugh, jingles the gold in his pocket and rings for BERTINE who enters, left. As it is growing dark, BERTINE turns on the electric lamp on the table.*]

D'OR. M. Bertine, at what time does work cease?

BERTINE. [*Consults his watch.*] In twenty minutes, monsieur.

D'OR. Will you kindly ask Mlle. Courteaux to come to the office before she leaves? You may tell her to come at once.

BERTINE. Very well, monsieur. [*He goes off, rear left. D'OR takes the agreement from his pocket and laughs over it. He looks over other papers on the desk with deprecatory gestures. For a few moments he gazes at the portrait of Lehmann senior. ADRIENNE enters, rear left, followed by BERTINE.*]

BERTINE. Anything further, monsieur?

D'OR. Not at present. [*Exit BERTINE, left. ADRIENNE stands looking steadily at D'OR.*] Mlle. Courteaux, you doubtless wonder why I sent for you?

ADRIENNE. [*Simply.*] No, I am not wondering.

D'OR. But you surely cannot know? You see, I—that is, I was so much distressed when I heard of your sick mother that I desire to learn if I can do anything for her—perhaps a better doctor, or a trip to the mountains. I am much interested in her welfare.

ADRIENNE. [*Coolly.*] M. D'Or, it is impossible for me to believe that you are at all concerned about my mother.

D'OR. You might at least credit me with good intentions towards her. There was another reason for my summoning you. When I announced the increase in wages to the delegation, the others were profuse in their thanks. You said nothing—you burst into tears.

ADRIENNE. The rest believed you meant well by them.

D'OR. And you?

ADRIENNE. [*After a pause.*] I knew better.

D'OR. [*With a look of admiration.*] You are entirely too bright a girl to pass your best years in a factory. This morning I recognized your beauty and your charm of manner—now I learn that you are clever as well.

ADRIENNE. What next, M. D'Or?

D'OR. How did the shops receive the news of the increase?

ADRIENNE. The workers went almost wild with joy.

D'OR. And you alone find a sinister motive in what I did?

ADRIENNE. Am I wrong?

D'OR. [*With apparent wounded dignity.*] You are doing me a great injustice—I want you to regard me as a friend. I shall be perfectly frank with you. When I arrived here I had no intention of playing the philanthropist as I did a few moments ago. I would have supported the Lehmanns and there would have been no increase—not a franc for anyone—if I had not seen you at work.

ADRIENNE. All this would be very complimentary, monsieur, if I could ignore the rest of your frankness.

D'OR. When I urged the increase in wages it was to please you—you alone. I did not care a whit about the others—and the Lehmanns had to dance as I fiddled!

ADRIENNE. That was evident. I felt very sorry for them.

D'OR. Then you don't think better of me for what I have done?

ADRIENNE. How can you expect any one who reads your motives to think well of you?

D'OR. Of course, the increase was only a trifle for you after all! But suppose you could get away from the

lace-machine altogether, could live well, dress well and enjoy life in a way worthy of your beauty—would that make any difference?

ADRIENNE. M. D'Or, why do you find it necessary to insult me?

D'OR. Perhaps you care for that fellow Albert?

ADRIENNE. [*Quietly.*] No.

D'OR. Is there any one else?

ADRIENNE. No.

D'OR. [*More eagerly.*] I wouldn't use that word 'insult' if I were you. I am offering to take you out of a life of drudgery into one of comfort and affluence, to put the luxuries of the world at your disposal, to give you the one talisman to the real joy of living.

ADRIENNE. And that is—

D'OR. [*Drawing out a handful of gold coin and talking hysterically.*] Gold! Gold! Unlimited gold! The faithful slave that brings me whatever I desire. The power that sent the Lehmanns slinking out of this room a few minutes ago like a pair of whipped curs! The power that has placed the entire establishment of Lehmann Frères in my hands. I own it all—all, Adrienne!

ADRIENNE. And you are the man who is now being proclaimed throughout the town as the champion of the poor man, the friend of the oppressed woman—you, who seek to control only that you may corrupt!

D'OR. [*Nettled.*] How dare you speak thus to me? You forget that I am your employer!

ADRIENNE. That you are not. You have made it impossible for me to earn my living here. [*She moves toward the door, rear left.*] Even if you do own Lehmann

Frères, you might at least spare to your workers their own souls. You call gold your faithful slave; be careful that your slave does not master you in the end! [*She passes out quickly. D'OR stares after her and throws the coins on the table. He laughs nervously as he looks about, especially at the portrait of Lehmann senior. He picks up the petition, pulls out the agreement, and after some moments of indecision goes to the telephone.*]

D'OR. [*Looks up the number in the telephone book.*] 7—1—4 please. . . . Hello. . . . Yes. . . . Is that the home of M. Raoul Lehmann? . . . M. Lehmann himself? This is M. D'Or, at the office. . . . Yes. . . . I have changed my mind about purchasing your interest and your brother's. . . . Yes, I prefer to restore the plant into your hands. . . . Yes, a majority of the stock as well as a bonus for cancelling the deal. . . . I know you won't lose control of it again. . . . Yes. . . . I'm sorry I treated you and your brother so roughly to-day. . . . Why am I giving it up? Well, I've already had enough of it. Besides, your father's portrait makes me nervous. I wouldn't care to take it down—and I don't dare to look at it. . . . What's that? . . . You accept? Good! . . . Will you inform your brother? . . . Very well, in the morning at ten! Are you feeling better? . . . I am glad to hear it. . . . Good-by. [*He goes over to the table and slowly picks up the coins.*] To-day you played me a very shabby trick! [*He pockets the gold, puts on his hat, takes his cane and is about to leave when he again notices the portrait. He goes directly to it, takes off his hat with a bow and addresses the picture.*] M. Lehmann, I have the honor to bid you farewell! [*With a laugh he goes out at the rear right entrance as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE II

[*The music salon of the Chateau D'Or. A handsome room, most luxuriously furnished in white and gold. The grand piano at the left is also finished in white and gold. The central entrance leads to a wide corridor which runs parallel with the room. The furniture and hangings are over-ornate, showing plainly the triumph of wealth over good taste in their selection. The guests of M. D'OR are seated about the room in fashionable morning toilettes. On a sofa right are seated MME. CYPRIENNE DACIER and MME. LUCETTE CLARY. Before the curtain rises, the Prelude in C sharp minor by Sergei Rachmaninoff is played at the piano. As it concludes, the curtain rises and HENRI VAUX is seen standing at the piano, bowing to the applause of the assembled guests. (If practicable, the curtain might rise before VAUX has completed his solo.) As the scene begins, the anonymous guests chat in groups.*]

LUCETTE. Bravo, M. Vaux! You played that prelude beautifully.

VAUX. Thank you, Mme. Clary. It is a favorite of mine, but perhaps a bit too depressing for such a pleasant occasion as this.

LUCETTE. Not at all. We must remember that there is a serious side to life—don't you think so, Cyprienne?

CYPRIENNE. Of course. We can't have dance music all the time.

VAUX. But life—at least, life as the artist usually knows it—is apt to be sad enough; perhaps it is natural

that he should prefer a melancholy theme for subjective interpretation.

CYPRIENNE. Speaking of melancholy themes reminds me that Adolphe Lemaire is to be here.

LUCETTE. Why do you call this M. Lemaire a melancholy theme?

CYPRIENNE. Don't you know him? He exhibited that remarkable painting called 'Death in Life' in the recent *Salon*.

LUCETTE. I did not get to Paris this spring.

CYPRIENNE. You surely saw a reproduction of the picture—it was copied in all the illustrated papers—a young girl wandering through a sun-lit grove and intercepted by a shrouded figure of Death.

LUCETTE. Oh! I recall it! I shall be delighted to meet the artist.

VAUX. M. D'Or usually brings together the most interesting people at his musicales. I believe the poet Moreau is also expected. You know him, Mme. Clary? A brilliant but eccentric genius! [LUCETTE shakes her head.]

CYPRIENNE. You have surely heard of Jean Moreau. He writes those stinging verses against the government. M. Dacier says that the Opposition would be helpless without him. Of course, he pretends that his satires refer to the middle ages or to some other country, but every one knows what he means!

LUCETTE. Have you brought your daughter along, M. Vaux?

VAUX. Y'es; she was in the corridor a few moments ago.

LUCETTE. She is a most charming girl—so modest, so

refined, and so very reticent! She seems almost afraid to express an opinion of her own.

VAUX. Is there any wonder? The sort of opinions that society likes to hear are not the sort that a young girl can express with any self-respect.

CYPRIENNE. Oh! what a cynical remark! Could anything be more attractive than the sincere thoughts of a sweet girl who has not yet lost her illusions, who is still a stranger to the bitter realities of life? [*She sighs.*]

LUCETTE. My dear Cyprienne! Do not seem so vividly reminiscent! It makes me feel like an old woman to hear you talk in that strain. It isn't ages since we felt that way ourselves.

CYPRIENNE. It isn't ages, Lucette, in the number of years, but I feel that I have lived ages since then.

VAUX. So you regret those days?

CYPRIENNE. They were sweet; but life has been so varied since—I have enjoyed so much—that I cannot say that I regret the passing of impossible ideals. We must all awaken from the vain dreams of youth!

VAUX. I would have Hélène dream while the mystic charm still pervades her soul; I would not have her crushed to earth by the revelation of the deep-seated miseries of existence. I would foster her love for art, her devotion to music—in short, her taste for such ideals as are cherished by our genial and accomplished host, M. D'Or. [*Enter D'OR, at the centre, in a frock coat, gold waistcoat, wearing a conspicuous scarfpin and rings.*]

D'OR. My good friends! You have just enjoyed a treat! I heard the Rachmaninoff prelude from the corridor, M. Vaux. Your interpretation is masterful; it is

the grip of despair itself tugging at the heartstrings of humanity. We are all indebted to you and pay homage to your art. I am having some light refreshment served in the corridor. Won't you kindly step that way? M. Vaux, may I entrust Mme. Clary to you? [VAUX *leads with LUCETTE, the rest follow.* CYPRIENNE *takes D'OR's arm.* *When the others are out, he stops short.*]

D'OR. We need not hurry after the others, Mme. Dacier. I have not had a chance to chat with you this morning; you will not deny me the pleasure of a few words. I do not see your husband among the guests.

CYPRIENNE. He is very busy at the bank just now. He finds it impossible to get away—even for such a splendid affair as you are giving us to-day.

D'OR. It is right that M. Dacier should regard his business as his first consideration. He is becoming one of our best known bankers.

CYPRIENNE. Ah! you are trying to flatter me. My husband is like many others who are engaged in the money game—a good enough fellow in the ranks, but not likely to become a leader. He is somewhat envious of you!

D'OR. *He envious of me?*

CYPRIENNE. Yes—your close association with the house of Blaustein. He has sought for years to acquire the good will of that firm, but evidently his talents and resources are not sufficient to command their attention. I also am envious, M. D'Or.

D'OR. Surely not.

CYPRIENNE. I am envious of your future wife. Think of the unlimited wealth you will place at her disposal—the unfailing resource of gold.

D'OR. [*Sentimentally.*] I shall never marry.

CYPRIENNE. And why not?

D'OR. Because the one charming woman whom I know is already married. [CYPRIENNE *affects indifference.*] Her name is—Cyprienne! [*He takes her hand.*]

CYPRIENNE. [*Starts, but does not withdraw her hand.*] Hush, M. D'Or—you should not say such things! You should not call me Cyprienne. M. Dacier would not like it.

D'OR. Do you think there is the remotest possibility of my saying it in his hearing, Cyprienne?

CYPRIENNE. [*Archly.*] You are an irresistible man. How many hearts have you broken?

D'OR. None, I assure you. My own heart is more likely to be broken, unless—

CYPRIENNE. [*Coming closer.*] M. D'Or, you might say a favorable word or two about Dacier to the Blausteins—you have such great influence!

D'OR. [*Eagerly.*] I shall be delighted to do so, Cyprienne. We must talk it over some time. When can I see you?

CYPRIENNE. You are always welcome at our chateau.

D'OR. But I would see you alone!

CYPRIENNE. [*With feigned surprise.*] Alone?

D'OR. Surely, our plan is to arrange a surprise for M. Dacier. At what hour does he reach home?

CYPRIENNE. At four or later.

D'OR. Then I may call some afternoon—say at two? [CYPRIENNE *starts.*] We can talk things over quite by ourselves. And then—[*Enter BAPTISTE.*]

BAPTISTE. [*Announcing.*] M. Moreau! [BAPTISTE *retires.*]

D'OR. [*To CYPRIENNE.*] Confound the poet! I'd rather chat with you. [*Enter MOREAU.*] Welcome, my dear M. Moreau! I'm delighted to see you.

MOREAU. Pardon my lateness, M. D'Or. I have been attending a conclave of the Opposition.

D'OR. Still denouncing the government, eh? I hope you will find it more agreeable here. Mme. Dacier, may I present M. Moreau?

CYPRIENNE. [*Extending her hand.*] M. Moreau is an old friend of ours. [*Enter BAPTISTE.*]

BAPTISTE. [*Announcing.*] M. Lemaire! [*He retires.*]

MOREAU. Ah! so Lemaire is also late. Evidently we poets and artists are an unreliable class. [*Enter LEMAIRE.*]

D'OR. My best greetings, my dear Lemaire. [*LEMAIRE greets CYPRIENNE and MOREAU.*] We feared you were going to disappoint us this time—and every one is anxious to learn what work you have undertaken since your successful painting 'Death in Life.'

LEMAIRE. [*Staring vacantly and nervously.*] I've done very little lately. Heaven knows, I should be working, but that picture seems to have exhausted every vestige of inspiration in my being. I find it impossible to pull myself together.

MOREAU. I know the sensation—a great vital utterance leaves the inventive power paralyzed and one gropes about in vain for support.

D'OR. Gentlemen, if you will pardon me, I shall escort Mme. Dacier to the corridor for some refreshment. Pray make yourselves at home; I shall rejoin you shortly. [*Exeunt D'OR and CYPRIENNE.*]

LEMAIRE. [*Looking about.*] What a palace! What

wonderful appointments! Is it conceivable that the pen or the brush could ever earn such luxury for either of us? D'Or's supply of gold seems inexhaustible—and he spends with a knowing hand.

MOREAU. A pleasant fellow, our host! My only regret is that he sympathizes with the scoundrels who constitute the present ministry. If I could only get him to support the Opposition, we should have the Premier's resignation within a week!

LEMAIRE. Try him, Moreau! It's worth working for! I believe that the mere mention of D'Or's name as an adherent of our party would overturn the authority of the Premier. Try to have a quiet talk with him before you go—and let me know how you succeed.

MOREAU. I shall do it; with D'Or on our side the cause is as good as won! And then, Lemaire, a brighter day shall dawn for our country. We shall once more lead the way to higher and nobler achievement. [*Enter D'OR.*]

D'OR. You see, my friends, I have not kept you waiting long. Perhaps you would care to partake of some refreshment?

MOREAU. No, thank you. Like most poets, I think most clearly on an empty stomach.

D'OR. With many poets compulsion and not choice develops that opinion. And you, M. Lemaire?

LEMAIRE. [*With a significant look at MOREAU.*] I think I shall cater a bit to the inner man. I shall rejoin you later. *Au revoir!* [*Exit LEMAIRE.*]

D'OR. Well, my dear Moreau, on what are you working now? I hope you are not as destitute of plans as our good friend Lemaire?

MOREAU. No; I am writing a new poem which I hope to finish shortly.

D'OR. May I enquire the nature of your subject?

MOREAU. Certainly. I am seeking to glorify the future of our country and to blaze the way toward the realization of its noblest ideals. [*Slowly.*] Of course, such a dream is impossible under existing conditions.

D'OR. You mean the present ministry?

MOREAU. Yes. They are a group of detestable politicians who make all great questions of state subservient to their own schemes for personal power and profit.

D'OR. I think you are a little unfair to the Premier and his associates. You must not forget that every party when out of office rails against those in control.

MOREAU. But the Opposition stands upon a firm foundation of integrity and high moral purpose.

D'OR. Mere vamping, my dear Moreau. The minority is always respectable. It's their only chance to regain the ascendancy. If your Opposition should triumph they would soon be drunk with power and the present party could successfully parade its manifold virtues before the public.

MOREAU. So you really believe that in the long run there can be no improvement in government?

D'OR. Yes, if you choose to put it thus; and my advice to you is that you join the party in power. You have too much talent to squander your life in the service of a hopeless Opposition.

MOREAU. Hopeless? I thought that possibly you might be induced to join our cause—to become the patron of a new and better order of things.

D'OR. [*Apparently ignoring the remark.*] Of course, the ministry has antagonized the visionaries—idealists like yourself, who dream of utopian governments, but who have little or no experience in practical affairs.

MOREAU. An instinctive sense of right and wrong is the best equipment for a statesman.

D'OR. There speaks the poet! Now, may I tell you in confidence what really does constitute the best equipment for a statesman?

MOREAU. [*Curiously.*] What is it?

D'OR. [*Deliberately.*] Knowledge of the fact that his party has the approval of the Blausteins!

MOREAU. [*Astounded.*] The approval of a banking-house!

D'OR. The approval of the greatest power in the world—unlimited gold.

MOREAU. It seems hardly credible! The utter corruption of the existing state of affairs is beyond my comprehension.

D'OR. M. Moreau, let us talk sensibly about these things. I like your poetry very much; I admire everything about you except your political sentiments. Why do you not put your fine talent to better use?

MOREAU. What better use is there than devotion to the popular welfare?

D'OR. Nonsense. The people for whom you write cannot appreciate the subtlety of your thought nor the nobility of your inspired poetic flights. They place a scant value upon your efforts. The present government honors its friends more highly. A poem in praise of the ministry would bring you greater material reward and

more renown than ten years of labor for the ungrateful Opposition.

MOREAU. M. D'Or, I am devoted to our cause; I would not write a poem in commendation of the present ministry for fifty thousand francs.

D'OR. [*Alert.*] You would not?

MOREAU. No. It would be treason to the people.

D'OR. How long would you labor for the popular cause before you earned fifty thousand francs with your pen?

MOREAU. Five years at least.

D'OR. And you are unwilling to purchase a release from five years of drudgery by a single effort because of a conscientious scruple? You are indeed a patriot.

MOREAU. I wish merely to be true to myself.

D'OR. [*Slowly.*] M. Moreau, what would you do if some one were to offer you—say one hundred thousand francs for a poem over your signature addressed to the Premier and commending the present government?

MOREAU. [*Aghast.*] One hundred thousand francs! The question is ridiculous. You are trying to entrap me.

D'OR. The question is not ridiculous. I offer you that sum!

MOREAU. Are you serious?

D'OR. I shall not mince words. The government seeks the support of its most intelligent and most gifted people. You are one of these. The government would not, however, pay you such an amount as I have mentioned; that sum represents my personal gratification at the prospect of numbering M. Moreau among the champions of the ministry.

MOREAU. You are bribing me!

D'OR. I am not. I am telling you that there is fame and substantial reward for the adherents of the government; there is futile effort and wasted opportunity for the Opposition. You are a sane man; which do you choose?

MOREAU. But to write such a poem is a manifest renunciation of my high principles of conduct.

D'OR. To write such a poem is a declaration to the world that you have become a conservative. Are you familiar with that word 'conservative'? It is a word of excellent savor and of good repute. A man who betrays a cause is justly styled a renegade or a traitor; but a man who has held visionary views concerning government or society, and who as a result of maturer deliberation rejects such fallacies and becomes an adherent of the existing social order may properly be styled a conservative. That's the worst they can say about you—and the reward is the price of ten years' hard labor with the pen.

MOREAU. [*Bewildered.*] One hundred thousand francs! I can see it in every journal in Paris! 'M. Moreau joins the conservatives!' One hundred thousand francs!

D'OR. [*Jestingly.*] You will note that there is nothing conservative in the sum I am offering you. I should call it liberal—decidedly liberal!

MOREAU. [*Brokenly.*] After all, perhaps you're right. Lemaire will think I'm a cur—but I accept your offer. I may live to regret this step, but I cannot resist you. I shall write your poem and I shall mean every word that I say. Henceforth I am one of your party. There is no future for me elsewhere. I want you to understand that I am completely within your ranks. I will not be a hire-

ling, to puff the Premier in a single insincere poem. You have not bought a poem, M. D'Or—you have bought me, body and soul. Do you understand?

D'OR. [*Quietly.*] Yes. It was you I was bidding for.

MOREAU. [*More wildly.*] It's a serious matter, this tearing one's self out by the roots. I must have time for reflection. Pardon me, M. D'Or, it is growing oppressive here—I must have fresh air. I cannot meet Lemaire just now. You shall have your poem—a poem from the depths of my heart. It's fresh air I need—fresh air! [*He staggers out with a groan. D'OR looks after him and smiles strangely. He draws a handful of gold coins from his pocket and is about to jingle them when LEMAIRE enters. D'OR replaces the coins quickly.*]

LEMAIRE. You are alone! I expected to find M. Moreau with you.

D'OR. [*Coolly.*] He left me only a moment ago. Have you partaken of the luncheon?

LEMAIRE. Yes, and chatted with some of your delightful guests. I am grateful to find so many recognized Liberals among them. Are you being converted?

D'OR. By no means—but I like to know intimately all points of view. It's part of one's education, after all. I try to make these gatherings as varied as possible and to give free rein to the expression of opinion. Did you hear nothing that might arouse renewed inspiration for another great painting?

LEMAIRE. [*Gloomily.*] I shall probably grope long in the dark before I find another subject as striking as 'Death in Life'!

D'OR. Surely, there are many themes available?

LEMAIRE. Few that I should care to depict. I shall paint nothing ignoble, nothing degrading. If my brush is not destined to uplift and to glorify mankind, I shall cast it aside.

D'OR. A noble ideal, indeed; but ideals are evanescent in this corrupt old world of ours.

LEMAIRE. Are they not about all that is worth while?

D'OR. Rather too unsubstantial, I should say. After all, an artist must labor for his bread and butter. Of course, he may be so absorbed in his ideals that he ignores the gross commercial value of his inspiration and its product. I am told you sold your 'Death in Life' for a trifle—yet it is your finest picture.

LEMAIRE. I have no regrets. The 'Death in Life' was sold to a collector while it still hung in my studio. He offered two thousand francs—I needed the money and accepted. Had I anticipated the success of the picture in the *Salon*, I might have asked more.

D'OR. That picture would have been cheap at ten thousand francs. Perhaps you do not know that I offered your lucky purchaser twice that sum—and it was refused!

LEMAIRE. Twenty thousand francs for my painting!

D'OR. Yes, and it was refused. [*After a pause.*] I have an idea, M. Lemaire—a good one. Will you paint me a companion piece to 'Death in Life'?

LEMAIRE. A companion piece?

D'OR. Yes. You might call it 'Life in Death' by way of contrast. I will give you thirty thousand francs for such a painting, if you permit me to suggest the subject.

LEMAIRE. You are willing to pay that price for a painting of mine?

D'OR. I have an object in view. I wish to make the other painting ridiculous, so that the purchaser may be willing to part with it.

LEMAIRE. I do not quite understand—

D'OR. Why should you? It is but necessary that you accept my offer.

LEMAIRE. Of course I accept! It is many times more than I have ever received for a painting, but you are a rich man, a noble patron of the arts. Have you chosen your subject?

D'OR. You agree to be bound to it?

LEMAIRE. Yes. It is to be called 'Life in Death,' I understand, and is to represent—

D'OR. [*Slowly.*] A dead rat lying in a foul gutter!

LEMAIRE. [*With a cry.*] You are mad, M. D'Or!

D'OR. Not at all. I think it's a rather good subject to accomplish my purpose. I would like you to represent the rat as putrescent—

LEMAIRE. [*Horrifed.*] Stop, monsieur! You are insulting me. I shall hear no more of that.

D'OR. You gave your promise.

LEMAIRE. Yes, to paint a picture—not to execute a mad vagary of yours.

D'OR. I don't expect my realistic theme to conform with your airy ideals, but think of the money I intend to pay you for this painting.

LEMAIRE. It won't do. I must refuse.

D'OR. [*Firmly.*] I intend to have that dead rat, M. Lemaire!

LEMAIRE. Then you must get some one else to paint it.

D'OR. I intend that you shall paint it. Perhaps I

estimate realism too cheaply. I offer you forty thousand francs for the rat!

LEMAIRE. [*Almost in a whisper.*] Forty thousand francs! To drag my reputation as an artist through the slime?

D'OR. No. To initiate you into a new and profitable school of art. Do you not realize that mankind has a natural craving for the unclean and the depraved? Mine will not be your last commission in the realistic style. Remember that I am offering you twenty times as much as you received for your 'Death in Life.' If any one asks you why you painted 'Life in Death,' tell them it is a parody on the original, executed at my order.

LEMAIRE. [*Hesitating.*] If I did not need the money so badly, I would—[*Suddenly.*] I'll do it—I'll do it for you, M. D'Or. I cannot help myself. [*Beating his forehead.*] A dead rat—Great Heavens!—a dead rat! [*He rushes out wildly. D'OR is about to jingle the gold as before, but feels that he cannot. He mops his brow with his handkerchief and seems somewhat distracted. Meanwhile HÉLÈNE VAUX, a charming girl of eighteen, dressed simply in white, enters quietly and gazes strangely at D'OR as if to fathom his thoughts.*]

D'OR. [*Observing her.*] Mlle. Vaux! I did not hear you come in.

HÉLÈNE. [*Timidly.*] Pardon me, M. D'Or. I am looking for my father.

D'OR. Surely you will not deny me the pleasure of a few words with you. I am always glad to see you here with your father, but you seem desirous of avoiding me.

HÉLÈNE. [*Nervously.*] No!—I—

D'OR. My sole object on such occasions as this is to make my guests happy—to entertain them in a way that will ever be a pleasant memory in the days to come; yet you always seem apprehensive of harm—

HÉLÈNE. I cannot explain. It seems so strange that you—*[She stops helplessly. They gaze fixedly at each other.]*

D'OR. *[After a pause.]* Eleanor! *[He seems entranced.]*

HÉLÈNE. Why do you call me Eleanor? My name is Hélène.

D'OR. *[Embarrassed.]* Pardon me, Mlle. Vaux. I once knew some one of that name. You resemble her—you bring back fleeting memories of the past.

HÉLÈNE. *[Ill at ease.]* I do not understand—I must find my father. *[She goes off hastily. D'OR sits down at the right and rests his head on his hand as if dazed. He does not notice BAPTISTE who enters.]*

BAPTISTE. M. D'Or! *[Louder.]* M. D'Or! *[A pause.]*

D'OR. *[Recovering himself.]* Baptiste!

BAPTISTE. Mme. Dacier asked me to give you this note.

D'OR. *[Takes it.]* Very well. *[BAPTISTE bows himself out. D'OR opens the envelope and draws out a card which he reads.]* 'To-morrow at two—Cyprienne.' *[He quickly thrusts the card into his waistcoat pocket. His demeanor instantly changes. He is completely aroused from his trance. VAUX enters at the centre.]* Ah! M. Vaux, your daughter is looking for you!

VAUX. I have been neglecting her all morning. I

thought she was talking to Mme. Clary a few moments ago.

D'OR. Your daughter is a most attractive girl—one in a thousand. I congratulate you, M. Vaux, on the possession of such a jewel.

VAUX. [*Pleased.*] Yes, Hélène is a good girl—my chief consolation since her mother was taken away. It is my one regret that I cannot give her the musical training that her talents merit.

D'OR. Surely she has teachers?

VAUX. The best that my purse allows, but not the best to be had. We musicians cannot hope to win great wealth, yet I still have hopes that when my new symphonic poem is brought out—

D'OR. A new composition! I am glad to hear of it.

VAUX. It is almost completed. I have been laboring on it for many years. It was begun in the first hours of grief after the loss of Hélène's mother. I have put my very soul into that score!

D'OR. Have you a program in mind?

VAUX. I shall call it 'The Conqueror'—the record of a storm-tossed soul that works its way through peril and temptation to the triumphant heights of its ideal. You see how much of a dreamer I am, but I love the idea of the conquering soul—the personality that dominates and directs.

D'OR. [*Much interested.*] That is a very fascinating idea—the personality that dominates! I am sure you will win fame with 'The Conqueror.' Have you sought to glorify a particular hero in your composition?

VAUX. No. It would be difficult to find a man who

represents my ideal conqueror—who reaches the heights unspotted with the stains of the battle.

D'OR. The more I think of your idea, the more it pleases me. I always have sought to be such a conqueror as you have in mind—a man of commanding position and so equipped as to become a directing intelligence in the affairs of the world. This may sound boastful, M. Vaux, but I have a reason for speaking thus.

VAUX. [*Bewildered.*] I do not understand—

D'OR. You say that you have no particular hero in mind to whom you are addressing your symphonic poem. Would it be presumptuous on my part to say that I should feel honored to have such a composition dedicated to me? Let me explain more fully, M. Vaux—there need be no reserve. I have abundance of the wealth that you in common with others find so useful; you have a talent that can immortalize the man to whom your compositions are addressed. If you were to honor me with the dedication of 'The Conqueror' I should see that every resource were at the disposal of Mlle. Vaux for her thorough musical training.

VAUX. For Hélène's education?

D'OR. It would be a trifle for me, M. Vaux; to you it would represent long hours of arduous toil. Thus each of us can serve the other.

VAUX. [*Anxious not to offend.*] I must confess that I had a very different ideal of 'The Conqueror'—pardon my bluntness, but my hero typified spiritual achievement, not the conquests of material wealth.

D'OR. Of course—I understand. Spiritual achievement has a pleasant sound and at one time in the world's

history it probably meant something; but we are living in a very different age. The real conquerors of to-day are the men who act as stewards of the world's great wealth. I can buy you any man you may name, heart and soul. It is merely a question of price—

VAUX. [*Horried.*] M. D'Or!

D'OR. I know it sounds scandalous, but it is true—I have demonstrated my power. There are no conquests in this world like the conquests of material wealth.

VAUX. [*Sadly.*] I have lived in this world many more years than you, M. D'Or—I know the weakness of humanity. There is much truth in what you say; but we artists have not done our duty if we are content to depict the world as we find it—if we do not point the way to higher ideals—

D'OR. [*Impatiently.*] A truce to your ideals! I have heard more than enough this morning about ideals! I have just made you a substantial and flattering offer; you seem inclined to treat me in turn to a conventional discussion on the nature of the artistic impulse. You are a poor man, M. Vaux, though a talented one. You have a daughter whose future welfare is largely concerned in your answer to my offer. Are you foolish enough to hesitate?

VAUX. I appreciate fully what your offer means, but people will understand by my dedication that I desire to uphold you as the type of 'The Conqueror'—

D'OR. And why not?

VAUX. Because I had a very different conqueror in mind—one whose career typified a conquest by spiritual resource, by unflinching courage—

D'OR. [*Suddenly but with deliberation.*] M. Vaux, do you love your daughter Hélène? Are you mindful of her future—of the years when you will no longer be here to protect her?

VAUX. [*Completely broken.*] I can struggle against you no longer. You have triumphed! 'The Conqueror' shall be dedicated to you!

D'OR. [*Smoothly.*] I appreciate the honor, especially since there was no haggling over terms. Rest assured, M. Vaux, you will have no occasion to regret your trust in my generosity.

VAUX. [*Subdued.*] I have done it for my Hélène. [*He sits on the sofa, right, and seems overcome with emotion. HÉLÈNE enters and takes a half kneeling position on the mat at his feet. She places a small autograph album on his lap.*]

HÉLÈNE. Father, I have been searching for you. Mme. Clary wishes your autograph. Isn't it an honor! Just look at the famous names—artists, poets, musicians—

VAUX. [*Takes a fountain pen from his pocket and writes.*] Mme. Clary is very kind to ask your father to enroll himself in this record of genius. [*Turning the pages.*] What is this? M. D'Or, I find your name here!

D'OR. [*With a smile.*] Indeed! Does it appear out of place among your brilliant assemblage of earth's talented sons?

VAUX. No, no! Do not misunderstand me! I thought it was merely a collection of artists' autographs. I am pleased to see it includes at least one generous patron of the arts. [*To HÉLÈNE.*] Hélène, we are much indebted

to M. D'Or. He will make it possible for me to give you the best masters for your musical training.

HÉLÈNE. [*Rising.*] You could not accept such an offer?

VAUX. [*Embarrassed.*] I am dedicating 'The Conqueror' to M. D'Or. It has pleased him to express his generous intentions in return.

HÉLÈNE. [*Turning on D'OR with unexpected energy.*] 'The Conqueror'! [*Reproachfully.*] M. D'Or, you have taken advantage of an old man.

D'OR. Taken advantage! Those are hard words for one who has your welfare at heart. I am enabling your father to provide amply for you; indirectly I am helping you to make the most of life, to win fame and position if the talent abides within you. This you call taking advantage of your father!

HÉLÈNE. M. D'Or, we are here as your guests. I cannot speak frankly.

D'OR. If I have offended you, my roof shall not save me from your reproaches. Speak as freely as you will and tell me honestly why you despise my offer.

VAUX. Hélène, I beseech you, be careful how you answer.

HÉLÈNE. [*To D'OR.*] You see how thoroughly you have subdued my poor father! He fears that my frankness will forfeit the bounty you are disposed to heap upon us. You wish me to speak freely?

D'OR. By all means.

HÉLÈNE. Very well. M. D'Or, I fear the intention of your apparent kindness.

D'OR. Why do you say that?

HÉLÈNE. A few moments ago I passed M. Moreau in the corridor—Moreau, the brave champion of the people—and I heard him say that he had changed his political views, and now felt morally obliged to support the ministry!

VAUX. [*Astonished.*] Moreau a conservative! Impossible!

D'OR. What have I to do with Moreau's politics?

HÉLÈNE. [*Watching him closely.*] I cannot help thinking that you had a hand in his sudden change of faith.

D'OR. [*Carelessly.*] Why should I deny it? You would not believe me.

HÉLÈNE. [*Coming closer.*] M. D'Or, I would believe you, if I heard you deny it! Do you deny it?

D'OR. [*Without flinching, looking steadily at her.*] Mlle. Vaux, I admire your courage; I marvel at your penetration. I shall tell you the truth. I bought that fellow Moreau for so much gold. He's my man now and he'll take my orders when I give them. [VAUX groans.]

HÉLÈNE. Father, do you hear what M. D'Or says? [*To D'OR.*] Is there nothing else on your conscience? Are you aware that M. Lemaire is astonishing your guests by incoherent ravings about dead rats and foul-smelling gutters?

D'OR. [*Steadily.*] It's the subject for his next painting. The fellow is executing it at my commission. I chose the subject, and I pay him his price. [VAUX groans again.]

HÉLÈNE. [*To VAUX.*] Are you still inclined to dedicate 'The Conqueror' to M. D'Or?

VAUX. I have given my promise.

D'OR. I shall release you from that promise if Mlle. Vaux requests it.

HÉLÈNE. I do not request it. After all, you are a conqueror—you have triumphed over my unhappy father just as you overcame those other frail souls and dragged them to the earth.

D'OR. I release your father from his promise. His conqueror is a vain seeker after empty ideals. M. Vaux, you may dedicate your symphonic flight to whom you will, but I beg you to let me carry out at least my part of our compact. [VAUX looks eagerly at HÉLÈNE to reply.]

HÉLÈNE. You have made that impossible for us, M. D'Or. We cannot accept your generosity. [To VAUX.] We must not stay here any longer. Let us go home.

D'OR. Can we not remain friends? Will you not permit the resources of my wealth to prove my friendship?

HÉLÈNE. [More softly.] The best way to befriend you, M. D'Or, is to prove to you the futility of your wealth. Come, father.

VAUX. Good-bye, M. D'Or. [He offers his hand.]

D'OR. Good-bye. [He looks at HÉLÈNE.]

HÉLÈNE. [After a pause extends her hand.] Good-bye. Are you not convinced?

D'OR. Not yet—but you are very kind to me. [He kisses her hand.]

VAUX. [Near the entrance, as if inspired.] M. D'Or, at last I know to whom I shall dedicate 'The Conqueror.'

D'OR. To whom?

VAUX. [Taking HÉLÈNE's hand.] To my daughter Hélène! [They go out quickly.]

D'OR. [Somewhat seriously, after a pause.] Perhaps

the old man is right—and perhaps he is not! [*Laughs cynically and puts his hand as if by instinct to his waistcoat pocket. He draws out CYPRIENNE'S card and reads it again.*] 'To-morrow at two—Cyprienne.' [*He kisses the card as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE III

[A private parlor in the Hotel Royal, Interlaken. The room is handsomely furnished in dark red. There are wide double doors in the centre with elaborate panels on either side. On the left side there is an exit and a fireplace in which a fire is burning. On the right there is a window overlooking the street below. There is also an exit further front. The furniture is appropriate for a business meeting. A large central table is flanked by five armchairs. There is a large armchair, left; also a small table with an adjacent chair, right. As the curtain rises one central door opens slowly and CLAIRE LASALLE peers in nervously. Seeing no one, she enters and closes the door softly behind her. She is dressed in black, with a white collar, and carries a small leather writing pad. Her demeanor is that of a person undertaking a delicate and difficult mission. She goes to the door, right, and knocks cautiously. Receiving no answer, she stands for a moment, centre, in evident indecision, then advances to the door, left, and knocks. The door is opened and M. D'OR steps in. He wears black satin knee-breeches and a fancy house-jacket, heavily trimmed with gold braid. CLAIRE hurriedly draws a card from her pad and hands it to D'OR.]

CLAIRE. M. D'Or?

D'OR. Yes. *[Reads the card.]* 'Mlle. Claire Lasalle, stenographer.' *[He looks at her curiously, then at the*

card.] Ah! the Blausteins! I must confess I hardly expected them to send a lady! [*He bows.*]

CLAIRE. The Blausteins desire a verbatim report of the meeting.

D'OR. Are you familiar with such commissions as this?

CLAIRE. [*Smiling.*] Yes. [*She looks about.*] You must place me where I can write unmolested. It is not necessary that I should see them. My hearing is acute. [*She indicates the door, right.*] Is that room available?

D'OR. Yes.

CLAIRE. They are likely to insist on locked doors. You might let me lock myself in. I can open the door slightly after the conference has begun.

D'OR. Very well. I shall turn the knob as a signal to you that we are about to begin. Be very careful, mademoiselle!

CLAIRE. Have no fear. Such experience is not new to me.

D'OR. Do you know them—Muirhead, Graefflingen, and the rest?

CLAIRE. All but Andriev. He is a stranger to me. You expect them at three? We have little time to spare.

D'OR. You're right. I shall make you comfortable before they arrive. [*He crosses to the right.*] You will pardon my appearance, Mlle. Lasalle—I was dressing for this conference when you knocked.

CLAIRE. Certainly. Do not let me detain you. [*He goes off, right, meanwhile she opens her leather pad and gets her pencils ready. In a moment D'OR returns.*]

D'OR. I have placed a chair for you just beside the door. [*After a pause.*] Really, I cannot quite grasp the

idea that a woman should be entrusted with diplomatic work of this character.

CLAIRE. [*Facetiously.*] There are women and women.

D'OR. And, moreover, a few rarely endowed young ladies who can keep secrets—important secrets of state. Mademoiselle, I congratulate you! I hope the Blausteins pay you adequately for such unusual services.

CLAIRE. [*Simply.*] A thousand francs a session.

D'OR. Will you permit me to double it this time?

CLAIRE. [*Surprised, but on her guard.*] Why should you?

D'OR. [*Ingenuously.*] Why shouldn't I?

CLAIRE. [*Sharply.*] M. D'Or, the thousand francs that the Blausteins pay me are sufficiently tainted. I've sunk about as low as I care to. Does that answer your question?

D'OR. Your cleverness assures me that the Blausteins do not appreciate you at your real worth.

CLAIRE. Perhaps you're right—but I had the privilege of naming the degree and the price of my corruption, so I have no cause for complaint. May I take my place in the next room?

D'OR. Certainly. [*He throws open the door, right, for her.*] Make yourself comfortable, while I hurry into the rest of my official dress. [*She passes out.*] But let me first test our arrangement. [*He adjusts the door to a very slight aperture.*] There! How is that? [*He crosses to the left side and faces the door, right.*] Now, mademoiselle, can you hear me distinctly at this distance?

CLAIRE. [*Within.*] Yes, quite plainly.

D'OR. Can you hear me when I say that my offer of

that extra thousand francs will hold good after the conference if you should see fit to take it? [*No answer. He draws a little nearer.*] Perhaps you would hear better if I said two thousand francs!

CLAIRE. [*Throwing the door wide open and stepping into the room.*] M. D'Or, we two—you and I—are about to engage in a very contemptible business here. I am being paid my price; I trust you are getting yours. There should be some show of mutual respect even among the corrupt. If you annoy me further, I may be tempted to step out during your little conference to expose you for the despicable creature that you are!

D'OR. [*With a deprecatory gesture.*] Pray retire, mademoiselle, to your post of vantage. I shall risk no further verbal fusillade from that accomplished tongue of yours.

CLAIRE. [*With a sneer.*] Where did the Blausteins find you? They have the reputation of employing agents who attend strictly to the business at hand. Let us see if you can live up to that standard! [*She goes off, right, and closes the door with a bang. The lock clicks audibly. D'OR shrugs his shoulders and goes off, left, shaking his head. For a few moments the stage is empty. A knock is heard at the centre door. It is repeated, then the door opens and HERR LOBEN steps in. He draws out his watch.*]

LOBEN. None here yet! I have the honor to be the first. [*He crosses to the table, right, and puts down a red portfolio. A moment later MR. GILBERT enters, carrying a similar black portfolio. LOBEN'S back is turned.*]

GILBERT. Herr Loben, I believe?

LOBEN. [*Turning.*] Ah—you are the secretary of Sir Mortimer Muirhead—let me see—Mr.—

GILBERT. Mr. Gilbert.

LOBEN. Yes! Good afternoon, Mr. Gilbert. I infer that Sir Mortimer is to be at this mysterious conference?

GILBERT. [*He places his portfolio on the centre table and examines his papers.*] Yes. Is Baron Graefflingen also to be here?

LOBEN. I expect him every moment. [*He goes to the window and looks out. Comes back and watches GILBERT with his papers, then, after a pause, speaks as if in confidence.*] I say, Mr. Gilbert, do you know what it's all about?

GILBERT. [*Carelessly.*] What? This meeting with M. D'Or?

LOBEN. Yes. Do you know him?

GILBERT. I have seen him once or twice at the consulate. He is enormously rich—one of the Blaustein coterie.

LOBEN. Ah! so this is a Blaustein affair! I thought as much. Marquis Pallot and Count Andriev are also to be here. Quite an international gathering, eh?

GILBERT. [*Absently, busy with his papers.*] Yes, quite so. [*Suddenly.*] What's that you're saying? Pallot and Andriev?

LOBEN. I thought you took it rather mildly. Yes, both of them. [*A pause.*] Do you suspect anything?

GILBERT. What do you mean?

LOBEN. Don't you imagine that something is on foot when such a distinguished array of diplomatic talent gathers to receive orders from the Blausteins—

GILBERT. [*Springing up.*] To receive orders—from the Blausteins? Herr Loben, that is too absurd—

LOBEN. [*With a shrug.*] How long have you been Sir Mortimer's secretary?

GILBERT. Six months.

LOBEN. Still a youngster in diplomacy, eh? I have been with Baron Graefflingen for—let me see—seven years this winter.

GILBERT. Well?

LOBEN. Only this, Mr. Gilbert. To-day is not the first time that I hear the name of the Blausteins.

GILBERT. Possibly not! But you spoke of their giving orders—

LOBEN. I hate to disillusion you—there was a time when I felt about things as you do now—those were the days of my diplomatic innocence. [*Motor-horn is heard outside. LOBEN goes to the window.*] It's your principal, Sir Mortimer.

GILBERT. [*Looks at his watch.*] He's on time. It lacks a minute or two of three.

LOBEN. [*Coming forward.*] He evidently doesn't believe in keeping an emissary of the Blausteins waiting. [*GILBERT is annoyed.*] No offense, Mr. Gilbert—the others won't be long in following him. [*Enter SIR MORTIMER MUIRHEAD at the centre.*]

MUIRHEAD. [*Nods to GILBERT, then turns to LOBEN.*] Good afternoon, Herr Loben. Graefflingen's coming?

LOBEN. [*Politely.*] Yes, Sir Mortimer. He should be here now.

MUIRHEAD. [*To GILBERT.*] You have sent off the dispatches?

GILBERT. Yes; they went this morning. I have received a wire confirming your reservations at Geneva for next week.

MUIRHEAD. Very good. [*To LOBEN.*] I believe Baron Graefflingen is one of your delegates to the Geneva Conference?

LOBEN. Yes, he heads the delegation; our government is sending six representatives. [*Motor-horn is heard; LOBEN goes to the window as before.*] Here comes the Baron! [*He looks out.*] I'm wrong! It's Marquis Pallot and Count Andriev!

MUIRHEAD. Count Andriev!

LOBEN. Yes, Sir Mortimer. They are both expected.

MUIRHEAD. [*To GILBERT.*] Have you seen nothing of M. D'Or?

GILBERT. I asked before I came up. The attendants informed me that he had taken a suite here at the hotel. [*Enter PALLOT and ANDRIEV.*]

PALLOT. Good afternoon, Sir Mortimer. [*He nods slightly to the others.*] You know Count Andriev?

MUIRHEAD. I have the honor. [*ANDRIEV bows.*] My secretary, Mr. Gilbert—Herr Loben, secretary to Baron Graefflingen.

PALLOT. Are you familiar with the circumstances that bring us together to-day, Sir Mortimer?

MUIRHEAD. I know absolutely nothing except that the note from Paris asks me to meet M. D'Or at three this afternoon.

ANDRIEV. My note read, 'M. D'Or of the house of Blaustein.'

MUIRHEAD. Of course—mine also! [*Laughing.*]

Otherwise what claim would the gentleman have upon our attention? [GILBERT *starts and avoids the grinning glance of LOBEN.*]

PALLOT. I must say that I resent such a peremptory summons, coming from such a source; but there is no alternative, I understand—we must simply comply with the request. [LOBEN *coughs, and watches GILBERT's tense face.*]

ANDRIEV. We may as well be prepared for the Blaustein message—it undoubtedly concerns the Geneva Conference of next week. [*Motor-horn is heard again; LOBEN goes to the window.*]

LOBEN. It is the Baron!

MUIRHEAD. Graefflingen may be better informed than the rest of us. Perhaps he may be able to throw some light upon the very unusual procedure that brings us together.

PALLOT. I doubt it. The Blausteins rarely take any one into their confidence. They say nothing till they are ready to talk, but then—[*Enter GRAEFFLINGEN.*]

GRAEFFLINGEN. Good afternoon, gentlemen. Am I late? [*He shakes hands with the diplomats and nods to GILBERT.*] M. D'Or has not yet appeared?

MUIRHEAD. No. We've been counting on you, Baron, to tell us what it's all about.

GRAEFFLINGEN. I cannot speak with any authority, but from a dispatch received this morning I infer that the Blausteins are not pleased with certain details of the international agreement that will probably be adopted at Geneva next week.

PALLOT. [*Looking at his watch.*] I do not know how

soon M. D'Or is likely to join us—but I believe it would be advisable among ourselves to oppose any material alteration in the Geneva agreement.

MUIRHEAD. A united front might strengthen our position very much, if we only knew what particular part of the agreement the Blausteins are likely to assail.

ANDRIEV. I propose, gentlemen, that when M. D'Or arrives and explains the Blaustein views, we shall take the cue from one of our own number. I suggest Sir Mortimer as the leader of our united forces.

PALLOT. That seems to be most desirable. If we do not stand together there is not the least likelihood of our accomplishing much with M. D'Or.

GRAEFFLINGEN. I heartily concur in Count Andriev's proposal. We must keep the Blaustein emissary within bounds.

MUIRHEAD. Gentlemen, I appreciate the honor that you are showing me. At present we are groping in the dark—we do not as yet know the intentions of M. D'Or.

LOBEN. [*Warningly.*] Sh—h!! [*A pause. D'OR enters at the left, wearing an elaborate diplomatic uniform of black satin, with a broad gold band across his bosom.*]

D'OR. Good afternoon, gentlemen. [*Looking about.*] One hardly needs introduction to such a distinguished group. [*He shakes hands.*] Sir Mortimer, you are looking well—Baron Graefflingen—Marquis Pallot—Count Andriev. [*He stops at the secretaries.*]

MUIRHEAD. Our secretaries, Mr. Gilbert and Herr Loben.

D'OR. [*Shaking their hands.*] It gives me pleasure to welcome the future lights of diplomacy.

GRAEFFLINGEN. Perhaps you prefer that our secretaries retire during our conference?

D'OR. Not at all, Baron—not at all. It will do the young men good to be present.

ANDRIEV. Are we safe from possible eavesdroppers?

D'OR. [*Remembering CLAIRE.*] Certainly, but we can assure ourselves by locking the doors. [*He locks the door, left, and the central doors.*] This door is always kept locked, I believe. [*He goes to the door, right, and very deliberately turns the knob several times. The others present seem satisfied.*] Shall we be seated? [*They take seats at the central table, D'OR at the right end, then MUIRHEAD, PALLOT, ANDRIEV, and GRAEFFLINGEN. GILBERT sits at the small table, right; LOBEN in the arm-chair, left.*] Of course, we shall take no minutes of our deliberation—everything is informal and secret.

GRAEFFLINGEN. That is wise. This meeting must be regarded as absolutely confidential among ourselves.

ANDRIEV. I presume that it is agreed that no notes shall be taken by any one present—

THE OTHERS. Certainly—assuredly. [*GILBERT starts from his seat and stares ahead of him.*]

MUIRHEAD. What is the matter, Mr. Gilbert?

GILBERT. Nothing, Sir Mortimer. Pardon me, I thought I heard a slight creaking noise. I was mistaken! [*He resumes his seat. Throughout the scene GILBERT pays close attention, LOBEN twiddles his thumbs and yawns.*]

MUIRHEAD. [*To D'OR.*] Have any others been invited, or is the group now complete?

D'OR. Quite complete, I assure you, Sir Mortimer.

I dislike dealing with a large group of men. A few sensible minds gathered around a table can best transact important business. You have not been chosen at random, gentlemen. The Blausteins desired the leading figure in each delegation to be present to-day and I am happy to say that the choice has fallen upon you.

GRAEFFLINGEN. You are very complimentary, M. D'Or.

D'OR. Not at all, my dear Baron. Men like yourself who are leaders in shaping the destinies of their country are entitled to recognition and honor—but to come down to the immediate business of our meeting. You are all delegates to the Geneva Conference which assembles next week. Can you tell me, Sir Mortimer, what the convention is expected to accomplish?

MUIRHEAD. From the program, of which you may have seen a copy, it is evident that the principal purpose is to consider questions concerning international arbitration and to effect by general agreement a reduction of the active military forces maintained by our respective governments.

D'OR. The first is a laudable object and I believe the Blausteins are in hearty accord with the project. As for the second—is such a reduction possible?

MUIRHEAD. Not only possible, but very desirable; the military and naval budgets are the most serious problems that concern our treasury ministers.

GRAEFFLINGEN. There is widespread dissatisfaction throughout Europe at the enormous appropriation of funds for military purposes. It is our thought that if the Geneva Conference cannot effect total disarmament, it

can at least bring about a material reduction in equipment for war.

D'OR. It is proper that you should not misunderstand the attitude of the Blausteins toward this great question. They do not desire to foment strife among nations. As a matter of fact, they would not permit a European war at this time.

ANDRIEV. Would not *permit* a war! Those are strong words, M. D'Or.

D'OR. [*Smoothly.*] None the less, the older diplomats present will assure Count Andriev that my words are not stronger than the case warrants. [*He looks about. There is an awkward pause.*] I am sure the general silence is the best proof of my assertion.

PALLOT. Pardon my remark, M. D'Or, but I cannot understand why the Blausteins should deprecate warfare, yet at the same time insist that the nations maintain the highest military efficiency.

D'OR. It was to explain just such matters as you have mentioned that our little meeting of this afternoon was arranged. There are certain things that cannot be openly discussed—

MUIRHEAD. One moment, M. D'Or. Are you certain that you do not wish our secretaries to retire before you go into details?

D'OR. Assuredly not, Sir Mortimer. I particularly desire the young men to remain. Diplomacy has many valuable lessons to teach. Here they can learn some of them.

GILBERT. [*Rising.*] I should much prefer to retire if—

D'OR. Nonsense! I want you to remain—I insist on

it! [GILBERT resumes his seat.] You are aware, gentlemen, of the extent to which the Blausteins hold the bonds of your respective governments, but there is another side to the story. A government does not borrow money except to spend it. Now, while it undoubtedly pays the Blausteins to lend you their gold, it pays them still better to become national contractors and purveyors, thus getting back much of the actual money with an added profit in the second transaction.

PALLOT. By which you mean—

D'OR. Simply this, gentlemen. The Blausteins have secured control of your most important gun factories, your powder works, your saltpeter and sulphur deposits, your mines. They control the firms that get most of the contracts for the erection of fortifications and for furnishing the munitions of war. In fact, they feed and clothe your soldiers, they supply the horses—

MUIRHEAD. Can this be possible?

D'OR. Why should it surprise you? Is it not the most natural thing in the world? The vast Blaustein millions cannot lie idle in the vaults. Is there any wonder that with the accumulated surplus of three generations of shrewd financiering, this insuperable power reaches out into new fields to secure a firmer grasp upon the forces of civilization?

MUIRHEAD. M. D'Or, may I ask you to state precisely what the Blausteins desire of us, as far as the Geneva Conference is concerned?

D'OR. Assuredly, Sir Mortimer. The Blausteins are aware that the Geneva Conference will be watched with interest throughout the civilized world; the press will report its proceedings in detail—

ANDRIEV. [*Drily.*] But not these proceedings—here, to-day!

D'OR. No, that would never do. We must not give the rabble an opportunity to peer behind the scenes; it might interfere with the public performance. The Geneva Conference is presumably a gathering to foster universal peace.

GRAEFFLINGEN. Presumably!

D'OR. Certainly, my dear Baron! Can anyone predict what such a gathering will accomplish until the powers have sat in judgment upon it?

PALLOT. And we are here to get the verdict of the *real* powers and to settle the fate of the Geneva Conference a full week before it begins!

D'OR. You are unnecessarily bitter, gentlemen. I am surprised to find such strange ideals in a group of experienced diplomats. This is no fairy-tale world in which we are living—it is still the same old, wicked, scandalous and hopeless Europe that it has always been.

MUIRHEAD. I am afraid, M. D'Or, that you are being drawn away from the answer to my question—

D'OR. Thank you, Sir Mortimer—these idealists always make trouble. Now, to the point. What the Blausteins particularly desire is that the Geneva Conference shall not give the journalists a chance to become rampant. Most of those vexatious pests are subsidized, but there are always reckless fellows who have nothing to lose and who are ready to court notoriety upon the slightest pretext. The Blausteins therefore want a triumphant victory of the peace party at Geneva.

THE OTHERS. [*Astounded.*] The peace party!

D'OR. You misunderstand me. They want you to talk peace, to sing peace, to shout peace till you are exhausted. They want you to recommend measures advising partial reduction of military equipment and eventual disarmament in all countries, but at the same time they want it distinctly understood by all that not one of those recommendations is to be carried out at present. Just give each journalistic dog his bone to gnaw, and when all is over, things will go on as they are.

MUIRHEAD. [*Seriously.*] Then what you suggest, M. D'Or, is that we should go through the farce of gathering at Geneva next week as the ostensible delegates of our respective governments, that we should adopt those splendid measures that appeal to all of us, and then, to please the Blausteins, we should nullify the work of the Conference by permitting its recommendations to become a dead letter! It is no trifle that you ask of us!

ANDRIEV. [*Warmly.*] Trifle! He is asking us to become the Blaustein puppets! Are we here to take his orders?

D'OR. [*Smoothly.*] No, no, Count Andriev—not orders. I am not here to issue any orders, least of all to such eminent diplomats as you. I am simply telling you what the Blausteins desire; the rest I leave in your hands. Perhaps some day you will better understand the significance of the name of Blaustein! [GILBERT *springs up with a cry and with clenched fists stands quivering before D'OR, who has also risen.* MUIRHEAD *quickly steps between them.*]

MUIRHEAD. Mr. Gilbert, you forget your place! You owe M. D'Or an apology. [*The others have risen.*]

GILBERT. [*Tensely.*] I—I could not control myself, Sir Mortimer—

D'OR. [*Suavely.*] Pray do not take this seriously, Sir Mortimer. Your secretary owes me no apology. He did a very natural thing—I respect him for it. [GILBERT drops heavily into his chair holding his head in his hands. D'OR watches him curiously. The rest resume their seats. LOBEN twiddles his thumbs.] Of course, it is very unpleasant—this mission of mine. You can readily see that the Blausteins must protect their interests. We are showing you how you can satisfy the clamors of your people and silence the criticism of your newspapers by ostensibly complying with the popular demand. After all, the execution of your recommendations rests with others; you will do your duty at the conference.

ANDRIEV. Do you imagine that the people will tolerate this sort of trickery forever?

D'OR. Why not? The government that cannot control its masses by throwing them an occasional sop is a confessed failure—it deserves to fall. Count Andriev, your civic authorities have a most efficient ally in that universal force known as human nature. When your aristocrats engage against the rabble in that great game of skill popularly known as maintaining the government it is your own fault if you do not win; the dice are always loaded in your favor.

ANDRIEV. Suppose we should refuse to be parties to your plan?

D'OR. [*Looking around.*] If you personally are eager to defy the Blausteins, you will probably find that the rest of the gentlemen present are not similarly inclined. [*An uneasy silence.*]

ANDRIEV. [*Bitterly.*] Evidently, you are right! Heaven help the nations that have to take orders from the Blausteins! Is there anything further, M. D'Or?

D'OR. Nothing except that I wish to express my thanks to all of you for meeting me here this afternoon. I hope that we part as friends?

PALLOT. Assuredly, M. D'Or. We must remember that you are merely the representative of the Blausteins and in no sense personally responsible for the policy which they have adopted. It would be absurd to harbor any personal resentment against you. [*Offers his hand.*] I wish you good afternoon!

ANDRIEV. [*Likewise shakes hands.*] I have used hard words here this afternoon—they were intended for the Blausteins, not for M. D'Or. Good-day! [D'OR unlocks the central doors, and PALLOT and ANDRIEV go off together.]

D'OR. [*To GRAEFFLINGEN.*] Well, Baron, are you as kindly disposed as these others? [*They shake hands. He turns to LOBEN.*] I suppose you have learned a new lesson in the science of diplomacy?

LOBEN. [*Wearily.*] Bless you, no indeed! I have been in diplomacy for seventeen years; I have become hardened to such incidents as this. It's getting a bit monotonous. I wish there were some new forms of political corruption—they might prove interesting!

D'OR. I congratulate you, Baron, on your very blasé secretary. Such a man must be a treasure in your profession.

GRAEFFLINGEN. Good afternoon, M. D'Or. [*To MUIRHEAD.*] Sir Mortimer, do you remain at Interlaken?

MUIRHEAD. No, I leave for Lucerne this evening. I shall spend a few days at the *Kaiserhof* before going to Geneva.

GRAEFFLINGEN. I was about to ask you to dine with me. I am sorry you are leaving so soon. Good afternoon! [*LOBEN has meanwhile shaken hands with GILBERT and clapped him on the shoulder as a sign of approval. GILBERT stands in dejection. GRAEFFLINGEN and LOBEN pass out together.*]

MUIRHEAD. In taking leave, M. D'Or, I still feel that Mr. Gilbert owes you an explanation for his very remarkable conduct. I am sorry the incident happened.

D'OR. [*After a pause.*] Perhaps you are right, Sir Mortimer. Won't you permit Mr. Gilbert to remain for a few moments when you go? We can talk the matter over between ourselves.

MUIRHEAD. Mr. Gilbert, you hear what M. D'Or has said. You may rejoin me later at the hotel. Good day. [*They shake hands and MUIRHEAD goes off.*]

D'OR. [*Very pleasantly.*] Mr. Gilbert, Sir Mortimer has made it easy for me to have a confidential chat with you. I am indebted to him for it. I had no idea when I entered this room that I should meet such an interesting personality as yourself.

GILBERT. Sir Mortimer is right. I owe you an apology and I make it freely. I should have known my place.

D'OR. That is not the point. I want to know why you made that outcry?

GILBERT. I would rather not answer that question.

D'OR. I feel as if I have a right to insist upon an answer, Mr. Gilbert.

GILBERT. Perhaps you have. May I give the explanation in my own way?

D'OR. By all means! Let us sit down. [*They take seats, centre.*] Do you smoke? [*He offers a cigar.*]

GILBERT. No, thank you. [*D'OR lights his own cigar.*] M. D'Or, I sought the appointment as Sir Mortimer's secretary because I believed it would prove an opening to a diplomatic career.

D'OR. Quite right—a very good opening!

GILBERT. At that time I regarded diplomacy as my life-work. I dreamed of participating in the great affairs of state, of helping in my own small way to mould the history of our own day and generation. The diplomat seemed to be so important a figure, so essentially a servant of the state that I was dazzled at the thought of serving my country in that way. And now—[*He pauses.*]

D'OR. Now you think otherwise?

GILBERT. Until to-day I regarded Sir Mortimer Muirhead as one of the most enviable of men. Now I pity him—from the bottom of my heart. Kindly stop me if I offend—

D'OR. Go on. I want to hear all you have to say.

GILBERT. I learned this afternoon how hopelessly a man may be fettered in his efforts to serve his fellow men. To an experienced man like yourself it must be apparent how unfit I am for the profession I have chosen.

D'OR. Why were you so distressed to-day?

GILBERT. Picture a group of distinguished diplomats, representing the leading nations of Europe, gathered in secret conclave to hear the commands of a coterie of money-barons, and, what is worse, yielding to those commands in

spite of their own convictions! It is enough to make one's blood boil!

D'OR. You forget, Mr. Gilbert, that they are practical men of affairs. They know the power of the money-barons, as you choose to call them, and they act accordingly. A modern nation cannot afford to entrust its affairs to idealists and dreamers.

GILBERT. Apparently not; but what of the national honor? Do these secret compromises never become public? What can the reputable people of a great nation think when its rulers stoop to curry favor with the rich and powerful?

D'OR. My young friend, you have a distorted image in your mind; I advise you to set it right. Who are your reputable people who are to cavil at those who seek wealth or the influence that wealth affords? How many of your apparently reputable people are not themselves engaged in the pursuit of wealth by every method, direct or devious, that lies within their power? Look about you, Mr. Gilbert, and examine your fellow man a little more closely. Don't place him on a pedestal. He's a corrupt specimen of creation when you get to know him thoroughly.

GILBERT. [*Hotly.*] What makes him corrupt but the fact that there are forces of evil abroad to tempt him—

D'OR. [*Smiling.*] Like myself, for example?

GILBERT. Some men are not strong enough to resist temptation. You know that, M. D'Or. The shame of it is that men like you take advantage of it.

D'OR. Nonsense, Mr. Gilbert. We corrupt none of them. If need be we ascertain the price of their corruption, but there our responsibility ends. The work of the

world must be accomplished. We cannot have men pulling in all directions at once. There must be some harmony of action to achieve results. If any one impedes the progress of a great plan, it is policy to buy him off; if he refuses to yield he must be swept out of the way. Usually he is too wise to resist—he takes his price and withdraws gracefully. The world is waiting to be bought.

GILBERT. There is one thing I cannot understand, M. D'Or—why do you tell me these things?

D'OR. Because I take an interest in you. I should like to see you make something of your career. A few moments ago there were four prominent diplomats in this room who did me the honor to confer upon the important question that you heard discussed, yet for this quartette of notables I have infinitely less respect than I have for you. I took real pleasure in your outburst of disapproval.

GILBERT. But they all opposed you, particularly Count Andriev.

D'OR. Yes, but they all yielded at last—that is the fact that makes them contemptible in my eyes. Mr. Gilbert, may I ask what salary Sir Mortimer pays you for acting as his secretary?

GILBERT. Five hundred pounds.

D'OR. If I were to offer you a thousand pounds to become my secretary, would you accept?

GILBERT. No!

D'OR. If I were to make it five thousand pounds, would you listen to the offer?

GILBERT. No, M. D'Or!

D'OR. If I were to discover that the Blausteins needed an eminently trustworthy agent and that you fulfilled the

requirements exactly, would you consider a salary of ten thousand pounds?

GILBERT. Never!

D'OR. [*Puffing his cigar, coolly.*] I knew it! That's why you interest me—you are a human curiosity. A few years ago I was ready to declare there were no such men in existence. Remember, I have not insulted you by really making the offer that I put just now. I pride myself that I read your character aright and knew the offer would be rejected.

GILBERT. Are such offers ever made seriously?

D'OR. Certainly, if the man is worth it. Such matters are always subject to the dictates of reason.

GILBERT. I now realize the source of your overwhelming power. I have learned something from this interview—I shall not give up diplomacy.

D'OR. Will you remain Sir Mortimer's secretary?

GILBERT. Yes, for the present. If I am one of the few of whom you speak so highly, my country needs me and I intend to remain in her service.

D'OR. [*Smiling.*] There speaks the patriot! Be careful, my friend, to avoid tight places, so that you may not have to yield to the tempter one of these days. [*They rise.*] May I wish you success in your career? [*He extends his hand.*]

GILBERT. [*Painfully.*] M. D'Or, I don't want to insult you again—but—I'd rather not shake your hand.

D'OR. [*With assumed indifference.*] Just as you wish—it is better that we should understand each other exactly. Perhaps I should feel offended, but I don't—I'm not going to quarrel with you. I wish you success

just the same. You may be right, after all—you young fellows have a great deal of enthusiasm. There ought to be more like you.

GILBERT. [*Eagerly.*] M. D'Or, there's a real strain of good in you—why don't you give it a chance?

D'OR. [*Uneasily.*] I may change my mind some day. If I do, I shall remember you, Mr. Gilbert—

GILBERT. [*Seizes D'OR's hand and looks squarely in his eyes.*] I hope so, M. D'Or—I hope so! Good-bye! [*He goes out.*]

D'OR. [*Places his cigar on the table and looks toward the central door.*] I'd give my fortune for that man's outlook on life! [*CLAIRE enters silently at the right, holding her notes in her hand. She looks curiously at D'OR.*]

CLAIRE. Well—there are some honorable people, after all!

D'OR. [*Turning quickly.*] What! I must confess I had quite forgotten that you were in the next room. You heard everything?

CLAIRE. [*Drily.*] Yes—and profited by it, too!

D'OR. You have a verbatim report?

CLAIRE. Everything; even your interesting little chat with Mr. Gilbert.

D'OR. See here, mademoiselle—that has no place in the report. Kindly let me have those sheets.

CLAIRE. Never fear, M. D'Or—the Blausteins will never see any part of this report?

D'OR. What do you mean!

CLAIRE. I intend to destroy every line that I wrote in that room. I heard what Mr. Gilbert said. I will no longer be the servile spy of the Blausteins!

D'OR. [*With a sneer.*] Ah! Virtue seems to be contagious.

CLAIRE. There are always immunes.

D'OR. Your tongue has not lost its cunning, in spite of your moral awakening. So you won't let me have the notes?

CLAIRE. Not unless you take them by force. [*With determination.*] I warn you, I shall not give them up tamely.

D'OR. Calm yourself. You forget the Blaustein maxim, 'Above all things, no public scandal.' I shall not make the least effort to obtain those notes without your consent.

CLAIRE. Thank you. May I go?

D'OR. [*Earnestly.*] Mlle. Lasalle, I will give you five thousand francs for those notes.

CLAIRE. [*Frightened.*] Please let me pass!

D'OR. Ten thousand francs—for the notes.

CLAIRE. How dare you! [*A pause.*] Remember Mr. Gilbert!

D'OR. [*With a start, then quietly.*] Mademoiselle, will you give me those notes at your own price if I promise to destroy them—now, here, before your eyes?

CLAIRE. [*After a pause.*] I shall give them to you on one condition.

D'OR. Name it.

CLAIRE. [*Slowly.*] That you don't ask me to touch any more Blaustein money. I'm trying to do a decent thing this time.

D'OR. [*With admiration.*] I understand. You have my promise. [*CLAIRE fixes her gaze on D'OR, and hands over the sheets. He keeps his eyes on her as he tears the*

notes into tiny scraps which fall on the table. He gathers up the scraps and throws them into the fire.]

CLAIRE. [*Earnestly.*] We two are not entirely hopeless.

D'OR. [*Still gazing at her.*] Not after this!

CLAIRE. We are not likely to meet again. I am going to some remote corner of the earth—to try to forget the past. The Blausteins shall never hear of me again. Let us make one good resolution before we part.

D'OR. What shall it be?

CLAIRE. Let us both try to remember Mr. Gilbert!

D'OR. I shall never forget Mr. Gilbert—[*Extending his hand.*] nor Mlle. Claire Lasalle, stenographer!

CLAIRE. [*Taking his hand.*] Good-bye, M. D'Or! [*She hurries out at the centre. D'OR looks after her for a moment, then snatches the gold band from across his bosom and dashes it on the table with a gesture of disgust. He drops into a chair as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE IV

[*A sombre, darkly furnished room in a Balkan palace. There are wooden panels and heavy gold hangings; also a window, left, a door, right, and large double doors, centre. At the left there is a table on which is a lamp with a dull gold shade. Nearby are an armchair, a foot-rest and a smaller chair. At the right there is a small table with two chairs. Against the walls are several quaint high-backed chairs and a curious medieval stove. As the curtain rises, D'OR is in the armchair asleep. He wears a dark dressing gown with deep gold borders and embroidery. He still has his gold rings. The window at the left is open and from the outside come the plaintive notes of a shepherd's pipe. The light is that of early evening. EDITH PACKARD, dressed as a nurse, enters at the right. She feels D'OR's pulse and tiptoes noiselessly about. She places fresh golden flowers in a vase on the smaller table, then lights the lamp at the larger table and turns the flame low. After tidying the room a bit, she takes another look at D'OR, feels his forehead lightly and goes off, right. The shepherd's pipe is silenced. There is a sudden flash of lightning at the open window and the distant rumble of thunder.*]

D'OR. [*In his sleep.*] Not Death! Not Death! I've bought off Death for a time! Not yet! [*He awakes with a start.*] Miss Packard! I've been dreaming horribly again! [*He looks about anxiously.*] Miss Packard! Has Dr. Mirsky arrived? [*Listens for reply.*] They take

my money, yet they're not here when I need them most. [*He experiences a convulsive spasm and is unable to articulate MISS PACKARD'S name, though he makes a painful effort to do so. He rises heavily from his chair and staggers to the bell rope near the door, right. He manages to pull it and falls in a faint over the chair standing near. Lightning and distant thunder. EDITH rushes in and rubs his wrists. He revives and she succeeds in getting him to the table, right.*]

D'OR. [*Bewildered.*] Where am I? Yes—I remember—I called—

EDITH. You were sleeping peacefully when I left the room a moment ago!

D'OR. Not peacefully! I never sleep peacefully.

EDITH. Do you feel any better?

D'OR. Worse—much worse! How long did I sleep?

EDITH. Over three hours. It is past six o'clock.

D'OR. Evening already! Another day gone! [*Lightning.*

EDITH *starts to close the window. It thunders as she looks out.*]

EDITH. Oh! M. D'Or, a terrible storm is approaching! The whole valley is filled with black clouds! [*Lightning.*]

D'OR. Close that window quickly! I cannot bear lightning. [*She closes it amid thunder.*] Another storm! I shall lie awake all night! [*Groans.*] Hasn't Dr. Mirsky arrived?

EDITH. No, he has not come. Perhaps the storm will prevent his getting here to-night.

D'OR. I *must* see the doctor—he must come to-night! He takes my money; he should be at my beck and call. I

need him now—I may die before morning. Is there no one at the palace whom you can send to the village? [*Heavy thunder.*]

EDITH. Cyril is downstairs.

D'OR. The gardener's son? I'll not send the boy on such a night as this. Perhaps Mirsky will get here after all.

EDITH. He should come.

D'OR. I pay him well enough, eh? I pay you well, Miss Packard? I pay everybody well. I may be feeble, but I still have my gold. It serves me yet! [*Thunder.*]

EDITH. Do you care for something to eat?

D'OR. No, I have no appetite. I am an unhappy creature. Turn up the lamp, Miss Packard—it is too gloomy. I can scarcely see. [*She turns up the lamp. D'OR notices the flowers.*] Why are those wilted flowers on the table?

EDITH. They do seem wilted—yet they were quite fresh when I brought them in a few minutes ago. [*Thunder.*] Perhaps the storm—

D'OR. Nonsense! A storm cannot affect cut flowers! They must have been dying when you brought them in. [*Raises their drooping heads.*] Dying! Dying—their golden beauty waning—a few hours more and all will be over! [*Groans.*] I must see Mirsky! I feel wretched to-night. Look down the road, Miss Packard, and see if there are any signs of the doctor's carriage. He would not come on foot to-night. [*EDITH opens the window. Lightning and a wild blast of wind. D'OR covers his eyes and groans.*]

EDITH. [*Peering out.*] It is too dark to see far—but the road seems quite deserted. [*Thunder.*]

D'OR. Quick! Close the window! [EDITH *does so.*] Even Mirsky fails me when I need him most. He shall hear from me to-morrow—[*A pause.*] if I am still alive. Have you had your dinner?

EDITH. No, but there's no hurry—I do not wish to leave you alone.

D'OR. Get your dinner by all means. You are young and healthy—you can enjoy it. Send up Cyril to keep me company; I like the boy.

EDITH. Very well. Is there nothing else I can do for you?

D'OR. [*More softly.*] Nothing, Miss Packard. You are very kind to me. Are you satisfied in this Balkan wilderness? Am I paying you enough for coming to this desolate region?

EDITH. Don't say such things. I am a nurse—it is my duty to serve you. Besides, you have been very generous to me.

D'OR. Thank you. Run along now—and don't forget to send up Cyril. [*She goes off, centre. D'OR looks nervously about him, holds his hand over his heart, then draws himself slowly up and goes to the window to peer out. Seeing nothing he opens it. A furious downpour of rain is heard, then a flash of lightning half-blinds him. He closes the window with a loud bang.*] No hope of Mirsky to-night. Even my money won't bring him out on such a night as this. [*He walks slowly to the arm-chair.*] If he does not come, I shall be dead before sunrise!

CYRIL. [*Putting in his head, centre.*] May I come in, M. D'Or?

D'OR. [*Brightening.*] Cyril! By all means! Come in, my boy! [*He resumes his seat.*]

CYRIL. Miss Packard said you wouldn't be angry.

D'OR. I am very glad to see you. What have you been doing all day?

CYRIL. I have been exploring along the other side of the river. I left the palace this morning at five o'clock and joined some boys in the village. We tramped for several miles along the river, then crossed the bridge at Arak and went into the woods.

D'OR. It must have been delightful. You started at five o'clock?

CYRIL. Yes, it was still dark. I saw the sun rise from the Hadderberg. By dinner time we were over ten miles beyond Arak.

D'OR. How did you get home so quickly?

CYRIL. Oh! we saw the storm coming—at first it was a little speck of black cloud floating far off in the sky beyond the mountain range. We hurried through the woods and reached home a half-hour ago.

D'OR. You must have had a glorious tramp. Did you do any hunting?

CYRIL. Oh no! The season has not opened yet—we shall go hunting later on. M. D'Or, did you ever take such trips when you were a boy? [*Rumbling thunder.*]

D'OR. No, I never had such sport. I didn't live near the mountains and the forests.

CYRIL. [*Sits on the foot rest at D'OR's feet.*] How do the boys in your country spend their time?

D'OR. The most sensible spend their time in learning how to make money.

CYRIL. Do they need much money when they grow up?

D'OR. Nearly all of them think they need more than they have.

CYRIL. What do they buy with their money?

D'OR. Whatever they think they want. What would you buy if you had twenty florins?

CYRIL. A pair of hunting boots and a new knife. [*He pulls out his knife.*] Not a cheap knife, like this one—but one with six silver bands on the handle.

D'OR. Why six bands?

CYRIL. Because my friend Boris has one with five bands and his knife is the finest in the village.

D'OR. Ah! I see! And what would you buy if you had fifty florins?

CYRIL. Fifty florins! [*After a pause.*] I wouldn't buy anything. I'd save until I had a hundred.

D'OR. [*Interested.*] And then—

CYRIL. Then I would buy a handsome rifle such as I saw in a shop window in Buda-Pesth. Were you ever in Buda-Pesth?

D'OR. Yes, Cyril. I've seen those fine shops. Now, isn't it pleasant to think that you can go into such a shop with a pocket full of money and pick out anything you want?

CYRIL. Yes—it's like a fairy-tale.

D'OR. [*Drily.*] Well, that's why the boys in my country learn how to make money!

CYRIL. [*With enthusiasm.*] And when they have it, they go to the shops and buy what they wanted?

D'OR. No; by that time they have usually lost interest in what they wanted—and then they desire something which they cannot buy.

CYRIL. Then it isn't much fun after all?

D'OR. [*Stroking CYRIL's hair.*] No, it isn't much fun. You have something better than money, Cyril. You have youth and health—be careful how you spend them. You wouldn't sell them at any price, would you?

CYRIL. How can one sell youth, M. D'Or?

D'OR. By doing foolish things and by wasting the precious hours of early manhood—that is how one sells youth. I want you to realize how very rich you are, even if you haven't enough money to buy that new rifle. [*The noise of carriage wheels is heard.*] Do you hear a carriage? Can it be Dr. Mirsky, after all?

CYRIL. [*Opens the window.*] Yes, it is the doctor—and another man with him in a long white robe—a strange-looking man!

D'OR. You see very well in the dark, Cyril!

CYRIL. I have good eyes; father calls them forester's eyes.

D'OR. Is it still raining?

CYRIL. [*Puts out his hand.*] A little, but the worst is over. The clouds are breaking.

D'OR. I am glad of it; you may leave the window open. [*Enter MIRSKY at centre.*]

MIRSKY. Good evening, M. D'Or! I'm a bit late to-night on account of this cursed storm—I never experienced such weather before. The road to the palace is a veritable river! At every turn a fresh torrent bursts over it. How do you feel?

D'OR. Fairly well since Cyril has been keeping me company, but I felt miserable before—I feared you would not come.

MIRSKY. Not come for such a patron as M. D'Or! My dear sir, I would have come if it had been necessary to swim to the palace!

CYRIL. [*Laughing.*] People don't swim up hills, Dr. Mirsky.

MIRSKY. No, and well-behaved boys don't make impertinent remarks to their elders.

D'OR. Cyril tells me you had a companion in your carriage.

MIRSKY. Yes—the queerest fellow I've ever come across. I picked him up on the road just beyond the village. He had sought shelter under a tree but I saw he would be drenched if he remained there long enough—to say nothing of the danger from lightning. He's a sort of oriental sage—calls himself Ramanand. I expect to take him back to the village when I leave and have a chat with him to-night.

D'OR. I am interested in your find! Can't we have him up here?

MIRSKY. I turned him over to Miss Packard—I believe he is drying out at the kitchen fire. Cyril, run along and fetch up the philosopher.

CYRIL. [*Meekly.*] Very well, doctor. I hope you will forgive me for my impertinence just now—

MIRSKY. [*Clapping his shoulder.*] Impertinence, my boy? It was the truth. As you say, people do *not* swim up hill. [*CYRIL laughs and runs off, centre.* MIRSKY turns to D'OR.] Well, how is my patient? [*Feels his pulse.*] Still feverish and unsettled—appetite poor—all out of sorts, eh?

D'OR. Doctor, I feel like a man whose life is ebbing away. I had a horrible seizure this evening. It's all up with me. I've been burning the candle at both ends all my life. I have crowded more experience into my forty years than properly belongs there—that's all!

MIRSKY. My dear M. D'Or, you talk like a man who is preparing for another world, yet you are paying me handsomely to keep you here. One can hardly regard such remarks as complimentary—

D'OR. True enough, doctor, but there's no power of resistance left in me. I've been fighting Death for some time and now I have only one real weapon left—

MIRSKY. [*Surprised.*] One weapon?

D'OR. Yes, my money! Youth and health are gone, and I have long since turned my back upon my few friends—but my money is still my faithful slave. It has provided me this airy retreat in the Balkans, it has brought me such a devoted nurse as Miss Packard, such a skilful physician as yourself—

MIRSKY. Come, come—I'm not so sordid! A true physician thinks first of the professional obligation.

D'OR. But a successful doctor does not give up a lucrative practice in Buda-Pesth to bury himself in the mountains with a solitary patient unless the latter pays handsomely, eh?

MIRSKY. It is true that you are giving me many times what I could earn by my practice, but why do you constantly remind me of it?

D'OR. I don't want to offend you, doctor—but I like to feel that my money is still helping me to keep Death at bay. I have gone through life believing that wealth is

power and I want to think so yet. Don't you share that belief?

MIRSKY. Frankly, I do. I have even coined a new beatitude—blessed is the rich man, since he can have what he wants!

D'OR. [*Gravely.*] Not always—I have found that out. I want health, vigor, an interest in life.

MIRSKY. Your money would obtain any of these if you gave it a fair chance. You are sated, that is all—

D'OR. It is worse than that. I'm worn out—done for!

MIRSKY. M. D'Or, you are absolutely wrong. I cannot comprehend your passive yielding to this chronic invalidism. You harm not only yourself, but me likewise—professionally, I mean. I shall be quite frank with you. My reputation is at stake. All Buda-Pesth knows that I am treating the rich M. D'Or. If I restore you to health, my fortune is assured! I shall no longer be the promising Dr. Mirsky in his shabby carriage—I shall become the famous Dr. Mirsky in his automobile. Do you realize what it means to me?

D'OR. So you wish me to get well for *your* sake?

MIRSKY. Certainly, if you have no reasons of your own. I pretend to no philanthropy in the matter. You are paying me lavishly, M. D'Or—give me a chance to earn the money.

D'OR. [*Shaking his head.*] You've taken a bad case, doctor—I'm sorry for you. You'll have your money and the automobile in any event. Of course, you expect to find greater happiness in becoming more prominent in your profession?

MIRSKY. Yes, both happiness and reputation. I look upon it as a recompense for my early years of struggle.

D'OR. You had to make your own way?

MIRSKY. My father was a poor village shoemaker; my mother eked out his income by what she could earn at washing and sewing. I was the youngest of five children.

D'OR. And the others?

MIRSKY. They were all sacrificed for my sake. They are hard-working men and women to-day. My parents died before I achieved independence in my profession. I should like to help my brothers and sisters, but they refuse my aid.

D'OR. Perhaps you don't offer them enough.

MIRSKY. M. D'Or, they have pride! They feel that an unfair advantage was given to me—and they are right!

D'OR. I fail to see it. This was clearly a case of one rising from the depths, or none at all. If they have pride, they should take pride in you.

MIRSKY. It has made a permanent breach between us, I fear.

D'OR. And they will feel even more bitter when you return to Buda-Pesth and ride about in your new automobile?

MIRSKY. [*Gloomily.*] Yes, I have been thinking of that. If I could only drive them from my mind!

D'OR. Yet you look forward to happiness! Is there no way of making wealth obedient to our desires?

CYRIL. [*Putting in his head at central door as before.*] May I bring in Mr. Ramanand?

D'OR. Certainly—I shall be glad to see him. [*CYRIL throws the door open and RAMANAND enters in stately fashion, garbed in an oriental robe.*]

MIRSKY. Ah! Ramanand, quite dry now? I want to present you to M. D'OR, the tenant of this palace and my worthy patron. He has heard of our meeting on the road.

RAMANAND. [*With a profound bow, speaks in a deep, rich voice.*] My salutations and greetings, monsieur. I am indebted to you for your hospitality.

D'OR. Won't you be seated? [RAMANAND *takes a seat, right, CYRIL sits on the foot rest.*] I trust they made you comfortable downstairs. Didn't you suffer in the storm?

RAMANAND. A slight wetting—no more. I am accustomed to rough weather. I travel constantly on foot. It is no hardship for such as I.

MIRSKY. Are you familiar with this country?

RAMANAND. No. I am on my way to the West, to study the civilization of other lands. I have read of them and their manners; I now seek to know them by actual experience.

D'OR. You have doubtless traveled far enough to find things different?

RAMANAND. Yes, I already feel the mark of the West in your customs. In the East, all things are deliberate and, whether right or wrong, rest upon traditions handed down from the remotest ages. Here you strive for things that are new and you are ever ready to forget the old.

D'OR. But why do you follow such a roving life? Is there any profit in it? Will you be better off when you have completed your travels?

RAMANAND. There is much profit in it—I shall enrich my mind with golden thought—

D'OR. But does it enrich your purse with golden coin—that's more to the point!

RAMANAND. Money! It is a delusion!

MIRSKY. A delusion?

RAMANAND. [*Placidly.*] Yes. Has it ever proved otherwise?

D'OR. Why, it brings power, the thing best worth having in life.

RAMANAND. It brings mostly care and sorrow.

MIRSKY. Did you ever hear such a philosophy?

D'OR. [*To CYRIL.*] Cyril, you recall speaking to me this evening of a new rifle?

CYRIL. Yes, M. D'Or.

D'OR. We shall send to Buda-Pesth to-morrow for that rifle and when it arrives it is yours.

CYRIL. [*Leaping up in pleasure and kissing D'OR's hand.*] Oh! dear M. D'Or, you are like a good magician in the story-books!

D'OR. [*To RAMANAND.*] And the agency of such happiness as this you call a delusion! Where's your care and sorrow?

RAMANAND. [*Smiling.*] You are a ready man with your proof. No one can deny the momentary exaltation that follows a gift or a favor, nor do I believe that gratitude is a forgotten virtue. But look about you, and note what a curse wealth has brought upon humanity.

MIRSKY. I should not care to entertain the philosophy of the East.

RAMANAND. Mine is not the philosophy of the East. We also have the worship of gold among us and its

devotees lead the same blind lives in its pursuit as your own people. The views I express are my own.

D'OR. Then you really believe that the poor man is the happiest man?

RAMANAND. Yes, if he is not possessed by the lust for gold.

MIRSKY. And the rich man is the unhappiest man?

RAMANAND. Yes, if he is the slave of his own wealth.

D'OR. Rail against wealth if you will—I maintain that poverty has nothing to recommend it.

RAMANAND. [*Reflectively.*] I too sought material wealth as a young man and I gained nothing but care; for many years I have cherished poverty and my days are crowned with peace. I ask no better test of my philosophy.

MIRSKY. If you are satisfied, you have reached a state of mind that neither M. D'Or nor I shall ever experience. [*EDITH enters, centre; MIRSKY and RAMANAND rise.*]

EDITH. Pardon me—I have come to tell Cyril that his father is ready to take him back to the lodge.

CYRIL. [*Leaping up and running to the window.*] Oh! it is clearing up beautifully—the moon will rise soon. I suppose I'll have to go. [*He shakes hands.*] Good night, Dr. Mirsky. [*He stands abashed before RAMANAND.*] Good night, Mr. Ramanand.

RAMANAND. [*Stroking CYRIL's hair as if invoking a blessing on the boy.*] Good night, Cyril.

CYRIL. Good night, M. D'Or. Shall I pray that you should get better?

D'OR. [*Surprised.*] Should you pray—why—yes, if you care to.

CYRIL. You won't forget about the new rifle?

D'OR. What has the rifle to do with your prayer?

CYRIL. I think I could pray better if I knew I was sure to get it. [RAMANAND *shakes his head.*]

D'OR. Very well, Cyril, just pray your very best for me. Good night.

CYRIL. Good night, Miss Packard. Why don't you make M. D'Or get better? That's what nurses are for.

MIRSKY. The young rascal will be censuring me next for not having M. D'Or in perfect physical condition. Run along.

CYRIL. [*Laughing.*] Good night, everybody. [*He goes off hastily.*]

EDITH. [*To D'OR.*] It is time for your medicine.

MIRSKY. One moment, Miss Packard. We shall discontinue that medicine; I am not satisfied with our patient's response. We shall adopt a new course—no drugs at all for the next few days.

D'OR. I am heartily glad of it. I get far more benefit from your talk, doctor, than from your medicines. Our little discussion to-night has made me forget myself for the time. By the way, let us see how Miss Packard feels about the matter. She will be an unprejudiced judge.

MIRSKY. One whose opinion will be worth having. [RAMANAND *bows politely.*]

D'OR. We were trying to decide among ourselves whether wealth is a blessing or a curse. Do you believe it brings power?

EDITH. Yes, unquestionably.

MIRSKY. Does it bring happiness?

EDITH. Certainly. Why shouldn't it bring happiness?

RAMANAND. Does it bring sorrow and misery?

EDITH. Far too often, I fear.

D'OR. Are all three of us right in our contentions? Wealth seems to be rather fickle, Miss Packard, according to your view.

EDITH. It appears a very simple matter to me. The unattainable always seems attractive; what we possess is apt to pall after a time. Wealth does not usually bring power, nor happiness, nor sorrow until its possessor has taken some initiative in the matter. The owner of the wealth must in a large measure determine its influence on his career.

D'OR. If you possessed great wealth, would you test its power to secure for you the things that you might deem most desirable—social position, for instance?

EDITH. I think not. I should prefer to expend it in a quest of happiness, but it would be a happiness that came from service—from using the wealth to bring sunshine and peace into other lives. Perhaps as a nurse I have come to think differently than many other women—

MIRSKY. More self-sacrificing, I am sure.

RAMANAND. Does Miss Packard believe in the philosophy of service—that our lives can be counted most successful when we make ourselves most useful to our fellow men?

EDITH. Assuredly. Service seems to me the ideal of a well-ordered life. I can imagine no finer life than that of my honored country-woman, Miss Eleanor Richmond—

D'OR. [*Springing up.*] Eleanor Richmond!

RAMANAND. A noble woman, indeed, a goddess of charity. I met her in Bombay last year.

MIRSKY. I have heard of her—she organized a relief committee for the India famine—

EDITH. Yes, and is devoted heart and soul to the great cause.

D'OR. Eleanor Richmond—in India! [*To EDITH.*] You know her?

EDITH. Very well. I have been with her at different times for several years. I was a member of her party that went into the fever district.

D'OR. She—has not married?

RAMANAND. Such a woman needs no family of her own. All mankind is her family!

D'OR. How strange that you should know her. I always passed over the accounts of India famines in the papers—such unpleasant reading, such harrowing details.

MIRSKY. Think of the heroism of a woman who will plunge into the midst of such misery and desolation!

RAMANAND. There are parts of India where Miss Richmond is worshiped as a saint!

EDITH. She deserves it. I know of no one who has made such a splendid use of wealth as she has done. She has been an inspiration to me at times when I felt weak and discouraged. [*Moonlight shines in at the window.*]

MIRSKY. The moon has risen; what a glorious light it sheds into this room. We must be going, M. D'Or, if we are to reach the village before midnight. We shall have a well-lighted road, at all events. [*He goes to the window. D'OR is staring into space.*]

EDITH. I shall have the carriage sent around to the door. [*She goes off, centre.*]

RAMANAND. Monsieur, I am deeply indebted to you and to the good doctor for the shelter you have afforded me, and for your tokens of good will.

D'OR. [*Recovering himself.*] And to-morrow you continue your westward march—in search of truth?

RAMANAND. In search of truth, M. D'Or. There is the most precious wealth that the earth affords. It will be a long and difficult quest.

D'OR. I have been searching for truth for many years and in many lands; to-night I believe I have stumbled upon it by chance. A few hours ago I was wondering what new bribe I might offer Death to postpone for a time the final settling of my account. Now I yearn for a chance to redeem my past follies, to add a new and more creditable chapter to my career. You have done me much good to-night, doctor! I feel better and happier at this moment than I have been for many years!

MIRSKY. Not too fast! Don't be in too much of a hurry to deprive me of so profitable a patient.

D'OR. Have no fear, doctor—you shall have no occasion to regret the cure that you wrought here to-night.

MIRSKY. You are indeed a changed man—I am glad to see it. Good night, M. D'Or.

RAMANAND. [*To D'OR.*] Good night, monsieur. [*He bows.*]

D'OR. Good night! A pleasant ride back to the village! [*They go out, centre. D'OR examines the wilted flowers and laughs softly. He then goes over to the window and stands in the moonlight. He calls to the others below.*] Good night! Good night! [*The sound of car-*

riage wheels is heard. EDITH comes in, centre, and looks at D'OR a few moments before speaking.]

EDITH. You may catch cold at the window—

D'OR. [*Turning.*] Miss Packard! I did not hear you enter.

EDITH. You are feeling much better?

D'OR. I am a new man to-night. Pray tell me, do you know if Eleanor Richmond is in India now?

EDITH. She is on her way to India. She wrote me from London that she would be at Port Said in a fortnight.

D'OR. Port Said! You have a letter from her?

EDITH. Yes. Do you know her?

D'OR. We were very good friends—many years ago, over in America. It seems so long ago—almost like another existence.

EDITH. Would you like to see her letter? It tells of her plans for the coming year.

D'OR. You are very kind—

EDITH. I shall fetch the letter; I am sure it will interest you. [*She goes off, right.*]

D'OR. [*In meditation.*] Fifteen years! It seems like a lifetime! A lifetime of hideous nightmare and delusion. Fifteen years! [*He paces the room. EDITH returns.*]

EDITH. Here is Miss Richmond's letter.

D'OR. [*Takes the letter to the light and tries to read. His hand trembles. He speaks in an uncertain voice.*] Won't you read it for me?

EDITH. [*Reading.*] 'I am now in London with my secretary, Mr. Hanson, making final preparations for another year's work in the Orient. Mr. Hanson's wife and I have been buying great quantities of supplies to be

shipped to the East. She is a most helpful woman—just another like'—[*A pause.*]

D'OR. [*Softly.*] 'Like yourself.'

EDITH. [*Embarrassed, continues.*] 'From all reports the distress is even greater than before and we shall have to labor harder than ever to relieve the miseries of those unfortunate people. How my heart bleeds for them! I have found many good friends who have contributed generously to our fund, but the need is so great that we can never bring adequate relief. We can assist a little here and there, and instil new courage in those who are partly able to help themselves, but there is much that we can never hope to undertake. I wonder that I ever had the hardihood to attempt this work. Now it has become my mission in life and it means everything to me. We shall be at Port Said on the 25th, and shall spend two or three days there. I wish you could arrange to rejoin me this year. I recall our days of labor among the poor in New York and in Chicago. You were so very'—Oh! M. D'Or, won't you read the rest?

D'OR. [*Taking the letter.*] Too modest to sound your own praises? [*He reads in silence.*] Very true, Miss Packard, what she says of you is indeed true. No wonder she wants you with her again. [*He reads.*] 'The work is a consecration—it has made life very sweet to me'—[*As he goes on, EDITH silently steals from the room by the centre door.*] 'What a pleasure it is to bring the light of joy and gratitude into the eyes of others. In my devotion to their welfare I have tried to forget an early sorrow of my own'— [*He pauses, overcome with emotion. He looks up and sees that he is alone. His*

hand trembles as he holds the letter near the lamp.] 'I hope we may soon meet again—time alone can tell.' Time alone can tell! How that phrase brings back that last evening together in the garden—the legend on the sun-dial—'Time will reveal all things.'—[*He rises and stands by the window, glancing over the letter in the moonlight.*] 'I have tried to forget an early sorrow of my own'—*Tried to forget!* Eleanor! [*He gazes at the letter as the curtain slowly falls.*]

EPILOG

[A parlor in the Hotel Orient, Port Said, furnished as a writing-room for the guests. There is at the right a table with pens, ink, magazines, railway guides and folders. At the left a table with writing materials, blotters, etc. Each table is flanked by two chairs. There are also several comfortable armchairs and a revolving case with time-tables and other hotel literature. From the room a wide central entrance leads through glass doors to a porch with posted placards. There are exits right and left and a window on the left beside the door. The sun shines brightly through this window and also illumines the prospect from the porch. As the curtain rises, MR. MATHEWS enters at the centre and casts a critical eye over the room. He puts the papers, etc., into order at both tables and throws several soiled sheets into a wastebasket under the table on the right. MR. HANSON enters with a large bundle of letters and goes to the opposite table.]

MATHEWS. Good morning, Mr. Hanson. I hope you slept well.

HANSON. Thank you, Mr. Mathews. My first night in Africa was one of undisturbed repose. What a lovely morning! Is such weather common in Egypt?

MATHEWS. It is during the season. We often have fine weather at this time of the year.

HANSON. Your hotel seems quite crowded.

MATHEWS. It filled up yesterday after the arrival of

your steamer. Most of our guests are tourists who are on their way to Cairo and the Pyramids.

HANSON. Have you seen Miss Richmond this morning?

MATHEWS. Yes, she is now at breakfast. What a charming lady she is!

HANSON. One of Heaven's good angels, I should say. My wife and I have been associated with her for two years in her American charities and in this India relief work. Her soul is wrapped up in it. You should see how people respond to her appeal for aid. [*He reads the mail as he talks.*] One contribution after another. Our fellow-passengers on the ship raised a fund of one hundred pounds.

MATHEWS. That reminds me to give you this check on behalf of the management. [*He takes a check from his wallet.*] We desire to show our interest in the cause.

HANSON. Thank you very much. I am certain your kindness will gratify Miss Richmond. [*He reads a letter with an enclosure.*] Here's a curious one! From the English missionary at Kermeh—'ten pounds from our mission for the India relief fund.' Where is Kermeh?

MATHEWS. It is far up the Nile—at the Third Cataract. That's the sort of coöperation that counts; it shows that Miss Richmond's noble work is known in the remotest regions. [*He takes out his check book and writes.*] Mr. Hanson, I wish you would add this personal contribution to that of the management. I want to help a little.

HANSON. You are indeed generous. I wish the world could realize the nature of the task that Miss Richmond has undertaken—the feeding of impoverished thousands

is but a small part of it. There are schools and hospitals to be provided—an effort is being made to raise the whole country to a better standard of living. The fever must be stamped out—[*Reads.*] Twenty pounds—fifty pounds—Heaven bless them all. [*He takes up a telegram.*] A dispatch from Paris. [*As he reads it, the paper trembles in his hand. He starts up with a cry.*]

MATHEWS. What is the matter?

HANSON. [*Excitedly.*] The matter! It's too wonderful to be true. I doubt whether I'm awake! It can't be possible—yet here it is, black on white. It's like a voice from Heaven answering Miss Richmond's prayer. [*Hands over the telegram.*] Read it, Mr. Mathews.

MATHEWS. [*Reads.*] 'The Messrs. Blaustein have the honor to inform Miss Richmond that securities amounting to ten million pounds'—

HANSON. [*Wildly.*] It does say ten million? I'm not dreaming?

MATHEWS. You're wide awake—it's ten million. I'm not familiar with the sum, but I know what the figures look like. [*He resumes reading.*] 'Securities amounting to ten million pounds have been deposited with them to form a permanent fund known as the Eleanor Richmond Fund, the income thereof to be expended in the interests of Miss Richmond's great charities throughout the world. Provision is made that one hundred thousand pounds shall be immediately available for Miss Richmond's relief work in India. The Messrs. Blaustein regret that they are not at liberty to mention the name of the donor, who prefers to remain anonymous because he wishes only one name to be associated with the fund—that

of Miss Richmond herself.' Did you ever hear anything like that before in your life, Mr. Hanson?

HANSON. [*Almost delirious.*] Has there ever been anything like it before? It is stupendous! How can such a gift be kept secret! How can any human being give away ten million pounds without public recognition? Can you realize what burdens it will lift from Miss Richmond's mind? She can now proceed safely with many noble enterprises which she has long hoped to carry out when funds were available. How she will rejoice at this wonderful answer to her prayers!

MATHEWS. [*Gravely.*] By the way, Mr. Hanson, be careful in giving her the information. Good news may cause as severe a shock as bad news. Tell her gradually—

HANSON. You're right. It's a wonder it didn't knock me over—I haven't had my breakfast yet. I don't believe a doctor would recommend hearing such news on an empty stomach. [*Enter ROBERT DORR at the centre. He wears a plain sack suit and no jewelry of any sort. He seems alert and vigorous. HANSON continues to read the mail.*]

DORR. Good morning, Mr. Mathews.

MATHEWS. Good morning, Mr. Dorr. You are an early riser—the porter told me you went out at five o'clock for a stroll about the harbor.

DORR. I am enjoying the best of health. You must have observed the improvement in the four days that I have been here. The climate of Egypt is wonderful—bracing, invigorating!

MATHEWS. [*Drily.*] Yes, just now—but wait till next summer!

DORR. I haven't time to wait. I'll take your word for it.

MATHEWS. By the way, Mr. Dorr, you ought to know Mr. Hanson, secretary to Miss Richmond. Mr. Hanson, Mr. Dorr. You are both Americans—

DORR. The best of reasons for our knowing each other, Mr. Hanson. I have heard of Miss Richmond's splendid services for India. You have doubtless taken part in that work?

HANSON. Yes. Mrs. Hanson and I have been associated with Miss Richmond for several years. It has been a pleasure to help even a little in the great cause, but I've never been so happy as this morning. What do you think has happened?

DORR. I'm sure I never could guess.

HANSON. A noble hearted soul has established a fund of ten million pounds to carry on Miss Richmond's work.

DORR. Ten millions! Who is your Cræsus?

HANSON. That's the most remarkable part of it. He is as modest as he is magnanimous—he prefers to remain unknown.

DORR. What does Miss Richmond say?

MATHEWS. She doesn't know it yet. The dispatch arrived from Paris this morning.

HANSON. It will be the happiest day of her life, I am sure.

DORR. How long do you remain at Port Said?

HANSON. Our steamer leaves day after to-morrow at ten. That reminds me, I must send off a note at once to the steamship office. You will pardon me? [*He goes to the table, left, and writes.*]

MATHEWS. [*Beside the table.*] Just look at that mail, Mr. Dorr—contributions coming in from all quarters. There are many hundred pounds in all, and yet how small that seems beside those ten millions! How would you like to be able to give such a donation?

DORR. [*Uncomfortably.*] I—I think it would be very pleasant—I think I'd rather like it!

MATHEWS. I should say so! A man with such generous impulses should not hide his light—

DORR. [*Interrupting.*] Pardon me, Mr. Mathews, have you a Bradshaw handy?

MATHEWS. [*Indicating to the table, right.*] You will find one on that table. [*He crosses.*] Here it is. [DORR follows and takes a seat with his back to the others. MATHEWS turns to the back as if to go out and meets ELEANOR RICHMOND. He comes front with her. DORR pretends to be reading his Bradshaw.]

ELEANOR. Good morning, Mr. Mathews. It's a full year since I was here. How have you been?

MATHEWS. Very well. I need not ask—

ELEANOR. [*Smiling.*] Always well and busy. Perhaps I should say always well because I'm busy. What a lovely sunny morning. You seem to furnish such beautiful weather whenever I come to your hotel.

MATHEWS. I hope you will enjoy your stay here, Miss Richmond.

ELEANOR. I always do. I'm sorry it must be such a short stay, but you know—India is calling and I'm needed there. [*To HANSON.*] Good morning, Hanson—have you breakfasted?

HANSON. Not yet, Miss Richmond—I've been looking over the mail. The fact is, I'm not at all hungry—

ELEANOR. You're not getting ill, I hope? You seem strangely excited about something. Is the fever prevalent now, Mr. Mathews?

MATHEWS. No, indeed. I don't think anything serious is the matter with Mr. Hanson. He is simply suffering from a slight shock.

ELEANOR. A shock! Why, what has happened?

HANSON. You see I was reading the mail—it's a goodly batch of letters. Nearly all of them contain donations, both large and small—I was simply overcome by their generosity. Here is one from the English mission at Kermeh in the upper Nile valley. Mr. Mathews has given me a check on behalf of the management of the hotel and a personal contribution as well.

ELEANOR. [*Gratefully.*] Thank you for your aid. It is an inspiration to find people everywhere so anxious to help! [*She has taken a seat at the table, left, her back to DORR. HANSON is seated at her side and MATHEWS is standing.*]

HANSON. [*Slowly and seriously.*] Miss Richmond, you know that now and then there is an unusually large donation announced in the mail. [*She nods expectantly as she looks over the letters.*] That happened this morning. [*A pause.*] It is the most splendid gift that your cause has ever received. [*She drops the letters and looks eagerly at HANSON.*] This is a trust fund, the interest of which is to be applied to your work. Do not be startled at the sum—it is very great. You remember last year the Earl of Shropshire gave—

ELEANOR. Ten thousand pounds—a munificent sum! And you say this is even more?

HANSON. [*Deliberately.*] Conceive the Earl of Shropshire's gift multiplied ten-fold—a hundred-fold—a thousand-fold!

ELEANOR. [*Rising from her seat.*] Hanson, what do you mean?

HANSON. [*Rising.*] Miss Richmond, the amount is ten million pounds. [*A pause. She looks from HANSON to MATHEWS. HANSON gives her the dispatch. Tense silence as ELEANOR reads it. DORR trembles, but does not look around. The paper shakes in ELEANOR's hand.*]

ELEANOR. [*Faintly.*] Ten million pounds—a permanent fund—one hundred thousand pounds immediately available! [*She sinks into her chair.*] Can this be true? It is like the realization of a fairy-dream. Hanson, I *must* know the donor of this enormous fund—

HANSON. The dispatch says he prefers to remain anonymous.

ELEANOR. I must know. His name may be kept secret if he so desires, but I must see that man and thank him from the bottom of my heart for the good that he is doing. His bounty will reap a perpetual harvest—he must see for himself what his unparalleled generosity will accomplish.

HANSON. Shall I write to the Blausteins at Paris, asking that the donor's name be communicated to you?

ELEANOR. No—I shall let you have a telegram for them. I want to know before I leave Port Said. What a wonderful day this is! You knew of it, Mr. Mathews?

MATHEWS. Mr. Hanson told me just before you came in. Let me say in all sincerity, it is the kind of support that your noble work has merited all along.

ELEANOR. It makes me happy past all understanding. We can achieve real results now—not temporary relief, but permanent progress. Won't you get your breakfast, Hanson? I am forgetting all about you. No wonder you seemed so excited. I shall telegraph to the Blausteins at once. [*She reaches for a telegram pad and writes.*]

HANSON. Very well. [*He gathers up the mail, leaving the dispatch from the Blausteins in ELEANOR'S possession.*] Mr. Mathews, won't you deposit these remittances in your safe for the present? [DORR at his table writes out a check.]

MATHEWS. Certainly. Can I be of further service, Miss Richmond?

ELEANOR. Not now, but I shall call upon you later. Let me thank you once more for your kindness! I must get off this dispatch at once.

MATHEWS. Let me know when I can serve you in any way. [*He goes off, centre, with HANSON. ELEANOR, when alone at the table, reads the dispatch again, clasps it to her breast and looks upward in thankfulness. Trying to compose her own telegram, she once more reads the other and weeps softly as she does. DORR rises and turns towards her. She is trying to compose herself to write, but cannot.*]

DORR. [*Advancing.*] Pardon me, Miss Richmond—I should like to contribute a trifle to your fund. [*He hands her the check.*]

ELEANOR. How good of—[*Looks intently at him.*] why—I—[*In a whisper.*] Bobbie Dorr!

DORR. Yes.

ELEANOR. Bobbie Dorr—in Egypt! Oh! what a surprise! Were you sitting over there reading that Bradshaw? I took you for an ill-mannered tourist!

DORR. And you recognized me at once—after fifteen years.

ELEANOR. Is it as long as that? Then you must not mention the fact again. You've grown broader and heavier, Bobbie—you look more sensible, too!

DORR. And you're just the same charming Eleanor that you were in the old Lenox days.

ELEANOR. The idea of your saying such a thing! I just remarked that you seemed more sensible—now I am inclined to doubt it. What have you been doing all these years?

DORR. Wandering over the face of Europe and learning many things. I fear you have never forgiven me for the unceremonious way I cleared out after that dance of Aunt Martha's. I sailed from New York a few hours after that—that last evening we spent together.

ELEANOR. I have never forgotten that evening, Bobbie. You seemed like a man possessed of some evil spirit. You remember how you raved about the power of wealth—

DORR. I meant it then. My money is practically all gone now.

ELEANOR. You have run through that great fortune of your grandfather's? You have spent it all?

DORR. All but a very little—I couldn't give you much of a contribution—

ELEANOR. [*Looking at the check.*] How thoughtless of me! Here I have been holding your check all this time without even glancing at it. One thousand pounds! Generous as ever, Bobbie!

DORR. I'm sorry it isn't more—

ELEANOR. [*Examining the signature.*] What's this? What a strange way of spelling your name!

DORR. I've been known as M. D'Or ever since I left America—it was simply a fancy of mine. Now that I'm through with my money, I shall be plain Bobbie Dorr hereafter.

ELEANOR. It certainly sounds better, Bobbie—more like old times. Do you know, I always felt that we should meet again and that you would tell me truly whether or not wealth can buy power—

DORR. It cannot, Eleanor, I admit that. I spent my money foolishly for the most part—that is, until recently, when I acquired more common sense—but I'm glad I'm done with it. Now I'm going to ask you a favor.

ELEANOR. What is it, Bobbie?

DORR. Won't you take me along to India?

ELEANOR. Take you along to India! Why, this is no pleasure excursion. It means work—the hardest kind of work.

DORR. [*Dejectedly.*] I know I don't amount to much, but I thought I might serve as a second or third assistant secretary. [*Brightening.*] I was watching your secretary this morning. When the mail comes in I might open the envelopes and hand them over to Mr. Hanson.

ELEANOR. And what then?

DORR. Well, I suppose I'd have to look out of the window until the next mail arrived. But, Eleanor, I'm serious about this—I'm no longer the frivolous youngster I was at Lenox.

ELEANOR. We've both seen a good bit of life since then, Bobbie. I became interested in charitable work, and

my labors at home and in India have been crowned with great success. Did you hear us speak before of the wonderful good fortune that has just befallen us—the income of ten million pounds to be annually devoted to our cause? Isn't it marvelous! I was just about to write in order to learn the name of the donor.

DORR. I shouldn't ask the Blausteins about him—they won't tell you anyway.

ELEANOR. How did you know it was the Blausteins? I didn't mention their name.

DORR. Why, I—that is, Mr. Hanson happened to mention it to Mr. Mathews before you came in.

ELEANOR. And knowing that, you were willing to sit there in that cold-blooded manner reading your Bradshaw?

DORR. I didn't want to take you by surprise. I wanted to give you a chance to hear what Mr. Hanson had to say before I forced my unworthy self on your attention.

ELEANOR. What Mr. Hanson had to say? It seems to me that you show very little enthusiasm over this wonderful endowment. I must discover the donor; won't you help me?

DORR. I don't see why you bother about him. He's probably some eccentric old fellow—he must be a queer chap to turn over such a sum to a Board of Trustees—

ELEANOR. Board of Trustees—[*Reading the dispatch.*] The dispatch says nothing about a Board of Trustees!

DORR. Doesn't it? Well, you see, they usually do such things in that way. I inferred from what Mr. Hanson said to Mr. Mathews—

ELEANOR. [*Alert.*] Bother Mr. Hanson and Mr. Mathews. [*Coming closer.*] Bobbie Dorr, tell me the

truth. You left us fifteen years ago to prove that wealth was power.

DORR. I know I made myself ridiculous. I believed then that humanity could be bought and sold like merchandise over a counter. For a time I succeeded after a fashion. I know better now. I confess my defeat.

ELEANOR. [*Watching him.*] What did you do with that large fortune, Bobbie?

DORR. [*Evasively.*] It's all gone—no use crying over spilled milk. I'm rather poor now, and glad of it. There's just enough left to provide for my wants. All the rest is gone. Why do you look at me so strangely? It's all spent—that is, I got rid of it—I had no further use for it—I—gave it away—I—

ELEANOR. Bobbie! It was you!!

DORR. Eleanor, a few moments ago you remarked to Mr. Hanson that you wanted the donor of that fund to see what good it would accomplish. Now I—I'm willing to confess—provided you take me along to India.

ELEANOR. You have triumphed, after all! Wealth is power!

DORR. Only when such a noble soul as yours dispenses it. [*He takes her hand.*] Give me a chance, Eleanor! May I go along to India?

ELEANOR. Yes. [*She picks up her half-finished dispatch to the Blausteins and smilingly they look at it as the curtain falls.*]

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